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Forestry company threatens spiritual wilderness experience

Valerie Walker

YARMOUTH, N.S. — A small monastery in southwestern Nova Scotia is taking on J.D. Irving Ltd., a forestry company which is a part of the multi-billion dollar Irving group of companies based in Saint John, New Brunswick. J.D. Irving owns some 200,000 acres of land in Nova Scotia, some of it next door to the Nova Nada monastery and retreat centre. The dispute is about noise, neighbors, and the value, or perhaps the cost, of silence.

The monks of Nova Nada and those sharing community with them spend all of their time living simply. Heat comes from woodstoves, light from kerosene lamps. Two days of each week and one full week of each month are spent in solitude — silence.

Nova Nada was established 25 years ago to provide a "wilderness experience." Approximately 500 retreatants over the year come for a week or more to enjoy the solitude. The nine or 10 monks resident at any one time are available to retreatants to "help discern the



The way of life of the monks of Nova Nada is being threatened

spirit" of their retreat.

A pamphlet describing Nova Nada quotes the prophet Hosea, "I will espouse you, lead you into the desert and there I will

speak to your heart." The centre professes to offer an antidote to a society that is overcrowded, over-protected and over-civilized.

Retreatants testify to the special experience of wilderness retreat: "the simplicity of life in the wilderness invites me to relinquish all but the essential. In the wilderness there is nothing but God. All the little white lies fade as soon as the truck pulls up to the Nova Nada gate." Another says, "My personal prayer life feels stronger and I have more of a reservoir of calmness to draw on...."

Disruptive noise

In 1995, J.D. Irving purchased the land adjacent to the monastery from Bowater Mersey, another forestry company. In July of the same year, the

stillness of Nova Nada was shattered to the dismay of the residents and retreatants at the centre. The noise was apparently caused by Irving's highly industrialized logging.

Sister Sharon Doyle describes the noise as "intermittent, round the clock, and seriously disruptive for the community." "When the noise was at its peak," says Doyle, "we had to close our doors and windows and were unable to sleep without ear plugs, which were not always adequate. During the day, we could not concentrate, and our work suffered."

Guests at the time complained, and Nova Nada residents feel sure that the number of retreatants will diminish, compromising the viability of the centre, which depends on the donations of retreatants for its upkeep. Doyle also insists that the regular residents will have to leave the centre while logging occurs close by, as their way of life will be ruined.

Irving's response

In August 1997, Nova Nada began asking J.D. Irving Ltd. to stop the "intolerable noise." They met with company representatives five times through the fall and requested a two mile buffer zone of silent wilderness surrounding the monastery. They also requested the relocation of a proposed logging road, and for no logging to be carried out on their southwest border.

On November 5, Irving claimed to have established a "two-mile buffer zone surround-

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Pakistani pastor and family rescued from persecution by CRC

Alan Doerksen

BURLINGTON, Ont. — A Pakistani pastor and his family, whose lives were in danger from Muslims opposed to their work, have been rescued and brought to Canada through the intervention of the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada (CCRCC).

Arthur Salim, 43, is a pastor who was living with his wife and six children near the city of Lahore, where he has been doing church-planting work for several years with the Pentecos-

tal Faith Church of Pakistan, a mission he started in 1992.

But Pakistan is a country where Christians face strong opposition from the Muslim majority. Since last June, Salim and one of his sons have suffered physical abuse from Muslims opposed to their work.

One Muslim family in particular has caused problems for the Salims because their daughter, Rahilah, attended Salim's church services, according to information from interviews with Salim obtained from

CCRCC. Rahilah, a high school student, was good friends with a Christian girl, Salimah Bibi, who attended the church.

Christian daughter tries to leave

On several occasions, Rahilah's family members were seen removing her from church during a service. Strongly opposing her new faith, Rahilah's family forbade any further contact between her and Salimah.

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News

Monks dissatisfied with lumber company's concessions

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 ing Nova Nada." On further examination, J.D. Irving offered a one-mile silent wilderness area and a second "restricted harvesting" mile. The original offer proposed "approximately five weeks of harvesting per year" in the second mile.

In response to questions raised by Sister Sharon Doyle, J.D. Irving Ltd. clarified that there would be roughly two weeks of hauling by truck following the harvest period, and one week of tree planting, which is done manually, and is inaudible. The proposed road would be shortened by half (because of the first mile buffer).

Irving agreed also to restrict its work to "daytime operations," meaning 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., cutting its shift work by half, as loggers run 12 hour shifts, back to back. The company also



The Nova Nada hermitage in winter.

revised its position on the equipment that would be used for tree cutting. Instead of the noisier fellerbuncher, a single grip harvester and chain saw will be used in the second mile.

Mary Keith, director of communications for J.D. Irving Ltd.,

feels that this proposal more than addresses the monastery's needs, and cannot understand why Nova Nada remains dissatisfied. Further, Keith says that responsible forestry demands a broad land base, as only two per cent of land can be

harvested in any one year. Keith also asserts that further concessions by J.D. Irving Ltd. would result in the loss of work for approximately 15 area residents, who depend on this work for their livelihood.

Disagreement continues

On November 10, J.D. Irving Ltd. contracted an independent environmental company to test the sound levels of the company's logging machinery at a distance of one mile. The test was carried out approximately three miles from the 65 acres owned by Nova Nada.

The consultant who conducted the study confirmed that while the fellerbuncher was operating one mile away, "we

couldn't pick up any distinctive noise on our sound-level meters that was significantly different from ambient noises like wind and leaves rustling." Irving insists that the logging activity proposed in its revised offer would be all but inaudible at one mile.

Sister Sharon Doyle dismisses the results. Nova Nada residents say that they have experienced logging at one mile, and the sound is not only audible, but substantially disruptive to their way of life. Further, they insist that a two mile unrestricted buffer zone would only "spoil" their way of life. Anything less than two miles, says Doyle, "would ruin it."

Muslim family persecuted pastor

... continued from page 1

The girls continued to meet secretly, but were actually being observed by Rahilah's family.

Then on June 19, Rahilah visited Pastor Salim's home and asked to see her friend Salimah. Since Salimah did not live there, she soon left. A few hours later, Rahilah's brother came to Salim's house asking for his sister and Salimah. Obviously, Rahilah was missing.

Accused of abduction

Later that morning, Rahilah's parents arrived and searched Salim's home for their daughter. Rahilah's uncle accused the pastor of abduction and threatened him.

That evening, Pastor Salim visited Rahilah's home and found her friend Salimah there, being kept by Rahilah's family. Despite denying any knowledge of Rahilah's whereabouts, Salim was later beaten repeatedly and taken to a police station for interrogation. He suffered four cracked ribs.

Meanwhile, Salimah was interrogated by the police and badly beaten. She was locked up in a local jail, where she is still under detention. Salim's son, Reuben, was also brought to a police station and beaten.

Murdered by her own brother

Rahilah finally resurfaced on July 3. She was recovered by police from a women's halfway

house in Gujranwala, and was taken home by her family. On July 9, she was murdered in her home by her 35-year-old brother. He has since turned himself over to police.

The CCRCC office first learned of Salim's story several months ago. Executive secretary Arie Van Eek explains that Aren Geisterfer, Christian Reformed chaplain for McMaster University in Hamilton, was contacted by someone in England who knew the Salims. Geisterfer put the Salims' friend in touch with Van Eek, who has since been involved with helping to bring the Salims to Canada.

"These people are being admitted on compassionate grounds" rather than as refugees, explains Van Eek, who negotiated with Canada's Immigration Department on behalf of the Salims. Van Eek helped obtain a minister's permit that assisted the Salims to come to Canada on the grounds of danger to their lives.

On December 2, the Salim family — parents, six children and the wife's mother — arrived in Canada. They are now staying in a motel until a permanent home is found for them. "The family is intact," says Van Eek, who expects them to stay long-term in Canada.

Van Eek is not sure of the status of Salimah. "I was told she was released on bond." CCRCC has made effort to help her escape to Canada, but Van

Eek says, "Canada Immigration made it clear to me there was no agenda to that effect."

Van Eek was cautious about releasing information about the Salims while the family was still in Pakistan because of the dangerous situation. He observes that Pakistani Christians from "younger evangelical churches" are suffering the most in that country, but that Christians from the Church of England, which has been working for a longer time in Pakistan, have been in less danger.

Blasphemy law creating terror

According to Paul Marshall, author of *Their Blood Cries Out* (which chronicles persecution of Christians around the world), one main reason why Christians are so vulnerable to persecution in Pakistan is that country's blasphemy law. It provides the death penalty for anyone who "blasphemes" against the prophet Mohammad or the Koran.

This law reads: "Whoever by words, either spoken, or written, or by visible representation, or by any imputation, innuendo, or insinuation, directly or indirectly, defiles the sacred name of the Holy Prophet ... shall be punished with death, or imprisonment, and shall also be liable to fine." Marshall writes: "The increasing use of the blasphemy law is creating terror among Pakistan's Christian population."

Much local support for Nova Nada

Valerie Walker

YARMOUTH, N.S. — Values are at the heart of the Nova Nada versus J.D. Irving Ltd. dispute, says Gary Arnett, local woodlot owner and manager of Yarmouth Natural Foods. He has heard the arguments about job losses predicted by J.D. Irving Ltd., and says that the numbers are utterly ridiculous, as a portion of the land is swampland and unusable.

Arnett rates community support for Nova Nada as quite high in Yarmouth. He is quick to point out that Yarmouth is not highly populated with Irving employees as the closest major operation is a sawmill in Weymouth, N.S.

And while southwestern Nova Scotia is a logging community, Arnett says that highly industrialized logging "has taken all the romance out of the work." Logging today, he says, is noisy and relentless, especially working with the fellerbuncher, which moves from one tree to the next without stopping.

Nasty Goliath

Bruce Johnson of City Drugs, a pharmacy in Yarmouth, says that most of his customers see this as a nasty conglomerate giant refusing to accommodate a fairly small community.

Mary Keith, Director of Communications for J.D. Irving Ltd., expresses resentment over the "David and Goliath" comparisons. She insists that J.D. Irving has not been immovable, and that they have made every effort to balance the value of jobs in the area with the monastery's needs.

Sandy Hankinson, an employee of J.D. Irving echoes her position. Hankinson believes that his single grip harvester would not disturb anyone from a distance of one mile, and moreover that loggers "...have as much right to work the woods as they have to do what they do [at Nova Nada]."

Bruce Johnson attributes the community's fondness for Nova Nada to its unique contribution to the area. The land Nova Nada owns was originally the Birchdale hunting lodge. It was always a place to go to get closer to the wilderness.

When Nova Nada was established, area residents were encouraged by the new owners' efforts to restore and preserve the atmosphere of Birchdale, without the hunting. Johnson says that the retreat centre benefits the community economically as well. However, he is quick to add that Nova Nada's most significant contribution is an opportunity for spiritual fulfilment, and he hears support for that from Christians and non-Christians alike.

Politics/News

South African aborted babies to be left to die

Angela Johnson

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (Pro-Life E-News Canada) — A health department directive that babies which survive abortion attempts should not be saved, has horrified South African doctors.

Babies who survive abortion attempts should be left to die even as they gasp for breath, according to new guidelines for the termination of pregnancy laid out by the Department of Health, and sent to all major hospitals at the end of October.

Medical practitioners across South Africa have been told that in cases in which gestation is in advance of 12 weeks, "if an infant is born who gasps for breath, it is advised that the fetus does not receive any resuscitation measures."

But some doctors and nurses have expressed horror at the news that they are being expected to do nothing to save a child who is struggling to live.

Impossible directive

"It is inhuman and against all my principles," said a woman doctor in KwaZulu-Natal, who did not want to be named. She said that under certain circumstances the new Abortion Act allowed for terminations up to nine months if there is a danger to the mother's life or in the case of malformation. "No way will I stand by and do nothing to resuscitate a child. It is impossible and we should not be put in such a position."

The release of the document comes just weeks after abortion on request for pregnancies up to 12 weeks formally came into play, following last year's legislation.

Health workers have already warned that up to 50 per cent of their members across the country are refusing to take part, while hospitals that are offering the service have been hampered by a lack of staff, training and equipment.

Irresponsible advice

Other points of concern raised by the document are repeated references to the use of drugs to initiate abortions, self-administered by the mother in her home. Yet medical experts point out that incomplete abortions at home carry the risk of severe pain, bleeding and even death.

"This is the ultimate in back-street abortions, and the women who will 'benefit' from this ad-

vice are mainly your rural black women and children. What if some woman starts bleeding and is unable to get to a clinic or hospital quickly enough?" said the female doctor.

She said that this procedure will force pro-life doctors to take part in terminations as they will have to act to save the life of any woman who is hemorrhaging as a result of this kind of do-it-yourself abortion.

Another section of the guidelines allows for counselling when the unborn child is judged to be less than 12 weeks old to be done by any health care provider — even if he or she does not have special training.

Negative medicine

Some health workers argue that the panel of expert advisers who sat on a special committee that drew up the proposals are putting doctors and nurses in a position of harming rather than helping their patients. They are demanding a rethink in the guidelines.

The row is likely to intensify resistance by health workers to offering abortion services. Professor Ronald Green-Thompson, KwaZulu-Natal's health secretary, asserts: "This document is not the Act per se and is certainly not cast in stone; [these are] guidelines. People at institutions are welcome to query any areas of concern."

He said that regarding "do-it-yourself" abortions at home, these guidelines have now been altered and will be circulated shortly."

A new federalism

Recently we received a questionnaire from Ontario's Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs. Called "Ontario Speaks: A Dialogue on Canadian Unity" it asked mostly "motherhood and apple pie" questions. But three queries elicited more specific responses to the Calgary framework, the latest attempt to save Canadian unity.

The Calgary framework consists of seven statements intended as a basis for discussing possible future constitutional amendments.

The framework mentions equality four times, but each refers to something different: equality of all Canadians; equality of all provinces; equality of opportunity; and (rather more vaguely) equality amidst diversity. Such rhetoric sounds pleasing, but these divergent conceptions of equality stand in tension.

For example, equality of the provinces might conflict with citizens' equality simply because of the extreme disparity in population among provinces. If P.E.I. is the political equal of Ontario, then the influence of each Prince Edward Islander is greater than that of each Ontarian.

Moreover, if Quebec's "unique character" gives its government a special responsibility to protect and develop this character, this would seem to depart both from equality of provinces and from the equal rights of citizens across Canada, since presumably Quebec could maintain language laws that might abridge Charter guarantees of freedom of speech.

Equality or equity?

Because of these tensions, it seems unlikely that the Calgary framework will do much to break the longstanding impasse over constitutional change, even if Quebec's Liberals return to power. What will move the issue forward, I believe, is a general willingness to limit, if not altogether to relinquish, the language of equality in favor of equity.

"Equality" is not always helpful because it tempts us to quantify the unquantifiable. And because it tends to be confused with sameness,



David T. Koyzis

its appearance in many contexts is not helpful.

Consider: if parents discover that one of their children is nearsighted and another has crooked teeth, they don't equip all of their children with both glasses and braces for the sake of treating them equally. It would, of course, be absurd to pay for such corrective devices for children who do not need them.

It is not coincidental that the first example of modern federalism was invented by men of the Enlightenment, schooled in abstract notions of social contract theory. The American founders devised a symmetrical federation in which, for many purposes, each component state was deemed the equal of every other state, irrespective of differences in population and culture. Subsequent federations, including Canada and Australia, adopted a similar framework.

Examine assymetrical federalism

More recent federal-type systems have departed from this model. Political power in Spain, e.g., has been devolved to 17 autonomous communities, not all of which relate to Madrid in precisely the same way. In the U.K., too, Scotland was able to vote for its own legislative assembly, without other regions assuming they had to have something similar.

If Canadian political leaders persist in using the language of equality without understanding its limitations, their proposals will continue to fail. It's time to look at more recent models to discover that assymetrical federalism (in which each province would relate to Ottawa differently) is capable of treating the diversity of Canadian society in equitable fashion.

David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont.

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Editorial

Phipps' Christology cuts the heart out of the gospel

Last night I listened to a radio panel consisting of three theologians discussing the central teachings of the gospel and the person of Jesus. The three panel members were: Father Tom Rosica of the Roman Catholic Church; Bishop Michael Ingham of the Anglican Church of Canada; and Rev. Bill Phipps, moderator of the United Church of Canada. The latter, after having been interviewed by the *Ottawa Citizen's* editorial board, has become the catalyst for recent public discussion about Jesus' divinity and his resurrection.

According to the *Ottawa Citizen*, Phipps does not believe the following: that Christ is God; that Jesus literally rose from the dead; and that he is the only way to God. Those statements caused an uproar among members of the United Church and concern among other believers in Christ. The *Citizen's* editors did not fail to notice that the moderator, who judges Christian fidelity more by social conscience than by personal piety and acceptance of true doctrine, wore a political lapel button reading "Zero poverty" rather than a religious symbol like the cross.

While listening to that panel discussion, I

was glad that journalists were asking theologians probing questions about the Christian faith. I was especially heartened by the soundly biblical witness given by Father Rosica. His words emanated a personal faith in the Christ of the gospels as he spoke of Christ's bodily resurrection as "a prefiguration of what will happen to me" and of Jesus' power over history and over nations. Judging by the comments made by Bishop Ingham and Moderator Phipps, I would have to say that either they misrepresented their denominations or those denominations have lost much of what lies at the heart of Christianity.

A lot of bombast

Father Tom Rosica was right in saying that the present discussions around the person of Jesus is taking place in a media age with little or no preparation and a lot of bombast. Yes, it feels good to have the secular media focus on the person of Jesus, but the downside of this public discussion is that it takes place in a vacuum, in a society where there is little or no Bible knowledge. Both Ingham and Phipps, on the other hand, seemed to be confident that people could sort these things out themselves.

I was wondering whether this difference between the two Protestant theologians and the Catholic priest was similar to differences at the time of the Reformation when the Catholic Church was distrustful of ordinary believers and the Reformers wanted more freedom from the hierarchy. But the emphasis which Reformers placed on Scripture (*Sola Scriptura*) and on submission to sound doctrine seems miles removed from the democratic idea that a biblically illiterate population can decide on matters of faith.

A wide river with banks

Both Ingham and Phipps worked with the idea that the Christian faith is a wide and deep river with many tributaries and that other faiths also are deep rivers that are worth exploring and may lead to the same destination. Father Rosica was the only one who emphasized the exclusivity of the Christian faith and the importance of respecting the banks of its river rather than asking how far we can go over those banks.

Language is very important in discussing the Christian faith or Christology, said Rosica. Phipps rather liked a sign in front of a Calgary church which read: "Come and have your answers questioned." Rosica's reply was: rather than put up a sign that reads: "Come today: up for grabs the divinity of Christ" why not say: "Let us come to know the person of Jesus." Churches have to offer a solid foundation of belief," said Rosica. "Syncretism will not provide spirituality for the long haul."

I liked much of what Rosica said during the

panel discussion. I don't like a sign in front of a church building inviting people to have their answers questioned any more than I like a sign inviting people to have their questions answered. There are a lot of questions in this life for which there are no answers. And to say that Jesus is the answer to all our questions is to simplify or spiritualize some deep things that are beyond our grasp. Such a sign too quickly anticipates the arrival. But to invite people to have their answers questioned glorifies the search and, instead of spiritualizing faith, intellectualizes it.

Maintaining the essentials

The Apostle John took a radically different approach to the matter of knowing truth. He writes in 1 John 2:18-27 that believers in Christ have an anointing of the Holy Spirit and do not need anyone to teach them. So we do not come to church to have our answers questioned any more than we come to have our questions answered. We come to church to meet Jesus, both human and divine, to lay down our burdens of sin and to be anointed with the Spirit, who will lead us into all truth.

We certainly do not need theologians to tell us who Jesus is. When Peter said that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, Jesus told him: "This was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven."

Of course, we may discuss things about the person of Jesus. Christology is a developing study. But some things never change and are so essential to the Christian faith that we echo the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 15: "If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith."

Phipps' Christology does not confess the Word which was in the beginning, but a human being born on a certain date, who has more of God in him than the rest of us. It sounds complimentary to Jesus, but it is in fact a real put-down.

The cross precedes ethics

It is evident from reading the *Citizen's* interview with Phipps that the moderator is more interested in Christianity as a system of ethical teachings than as the only way of salvation. I kind of like the picturesque language that both Jude and 2 Peter use when describing unreliable teachers: "They are springs without water, mists driven by a storm, clouds without rain, blown along by the wind, autumn trees without fruit and uprooted — twice dead, wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever."

Ah that feels good. That kind of language may not be politically correct, but it does help to skim the flotsam from the deep and wide river.

BW

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Letters

Let's have solid and responsible leadership

I am encouraged that Dr. James De Jong has made a public statement about church leadership (re: "CRC Leaders Bound by Synod," Oct. 31). I dare say that many people sitting in a CRC pew today are confused by all that's being said and done. This is in large part due to our church leadership's "dealing with dissent in a vacillating or indifferent manner".

Although Dr. De Jong's comments were directed at a particular issue, these same comments apply to less divisive issues as well. All our church leaders are bound by the "form of subscription." All, therefore, are obliged to follow the guidelines put forth by the sittings of synod.

The Christian Reformed Church Order is a printed compendium of these guidelines, and one of these (Art. 29) states that synodical decisions are con-

sidered "settled and binding, unless it is proved that they conflict with the Word of God or the Church Order." Only a sitting of synod can do such proving.

Trends against unity

In recent years we have been bombarded with many changes within the CRC. Many of these have become accepted practices without synods' first proving the reasons or need for such changes. In addition, many of these decisions so arbitrarily arrived at are largely due to social influences.

Because of this, the CRC Church Order will soon be out of date. Once outdated, the tendency will be to ignore it altogether. This will result in the "each for his/her own" syndrome. The clear intent of Church Order Article 29 is to protect the unity of the church.

The trend today is fast leading us

away from the objectives of a unified denomination. The final outcome will be independentism and congregationalism. This we should not allow! There is indeed nothing sacred about the Church Order or the CRC. But ignorance of the wisdom and direction given by past leaders at the congregational, classis and synodical level is a breaking of vows by current church leaders.

It is society's influence on the church which is driving so much of this rapid change. Should it not be the other way around? We of Reformed background, of all people, should know that God's Word and his church are to be "the solid rock" on which a society adrift should cast its anchor.

Jerry De Boer
Exeter Ont.

Don't oversimplify the debate

I appreciate the attempt by David Koyzis to help clarify the proper response of the church concerning the legal rights of same-sex couples (C.C., Nov. 7). He calls upon "us Christians to alert government to the reality of marriage as an intrinsically heterosexual union." He identifies the "character of marriage as a distinctive norm-governed institution with its own place in created human life," and that it is "a lifelong heterosexual union facilitating the upbringing of another generation." The relationship of a gay couple, on the other hand is "a type of friendship and ought not to be confused with a marriage."

Nowhere in this scenario do we find the people at the centre of this complex issue: the gay couples who are raising children. In my Toronto neighborhood, gay couples who are "facilitating the upbringing of another generation" are both numerous and visible. To complicate matters further, most of the families that I know well are Christians, representing

collectively three different denominations.

In spite of what we take Gen. 2:24 to mean, I've concluded that the love, caring and commitment of these couples is as deep as that of any married couple. Do we insist that their relationship is "a type of friendship," that "ought not to be confused with a marriage" simply because they are gay? When we say that "marriage is not simply a product of arbitrary human wills," are we implying that the relationship of a Christian gay couple is nothing more than that? More basically, are we including these people when we refer to "us Christians?"

We can do a great deal of harm when we oversimplify this debate.

I don't believe there are easy answers to this issue. However, if we don't acknowledge the reality of these Christian families, we aren't going to carry this discussion very far.

Don Baxter
Toronto, Ont.

Centre of life remains a mystery

Some comments regarding Robert VanderVennen's Nov. 14 book review of *Darwin's Black Box* by Michael J. Behe.

Why do those of us who know that God made the world want Darwinian evolution to collapse "like a house of cards"? Why is it that the word "theory" is not included? After all, it is Darwin's theory of evolution we're talking about.

I was very happy to learn that Darwin was a theist and that he not infrequently referred to God. Some of what I learned from Darwin's theory allows for a beautiful appreciation of how God built adaptability into living things. I can only imagine that God knew that the world would be a dynamic and, at times, tough place to live.

Ideas of "irreducible complexity" and

analogies of mousetraps and the Rube Goldberg contraption (whatever that is) to living matter are simplistic and deny the miracle that we and our universe are. For example, the contents of the black box, "the engine ... that makes organisms work ... is chemical molecules." Well, as a Grade 4 student can tell you, chemical molecules make up rocks and chairs too. Despite 50 years of scientific wonder and advance, the spirit or life force that animates "chemical molecules" is still pretty much a mystery to science.

By the way, what do you think of the likelihood of there having been a "big bang" while God made the universe from nothing?

Steve Uiljakainen
Berkeley, Ont.

Who is guilty of schismatic activity?

Having read Dr. Remkes Kooistra's letter in the Nov. 14 edition of *Christian Courier*, I am amazed at this audacity. He clearly believes that his ideas are worthy of publication, but he would deny Dr. James De Jong, president of Calvin Theological Seminary, the same recognition. And he adds insult to injury by accusing the president of schismatic activity.

I am more inclined to hold the opposite opinion. When I see Dr. Kooistra's misuse of Scripture in the reference to a "suitable helper," and his persistent promotion of views that are contrary to the teaching of Scripture, and the way he as an ordained minister in the Christian Reformed Church treats the church's convictions as they are expressed in synodical decisions, then I believe it is time Dr. Kooistra does the honorable thing and resigns as a minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church. Failing that, it would seem appropriate that his rights and privileges as an ordained minister be taken away.

If God did not create people as gay or lesbian (which I don't believe he did), it would make that condition a result of the

entrance of sin into the world. The homosexual lifestyle can, therefore, never be acceptable to God, regardless of how that condition came about and of how committed the partners may be to each other. The Bible clearly teaches that.

Equating love for our homosexual neighbors with acceptance of their lifestyle does not stand up. It holds no more water than equating love for our enemies does with acceptance of their violent behavior.

We don't need to look very far away to see what liberal interpretations of Scripture will eventually lead to in a church. We should not let that happen in the Christian Reformed Church.

(Rev.) Adrian A. Van Geest
Blyth, Ont.

Note:

After we had published Dr. Kooistra's letter, he informed us that he had not intended his letter to the editor for publication, only part of it. This was not clearly indicated; nevertheless, we regret any misunderstanding that has resulted from this unintended publicity.

Editor.

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Opinion/Advice

CRC in Canada responds to pollution report

Weeping by the (polluted) waters of Babylon

Reinder Klein

CREEMORE, Ont. — Newspaper stories warn of grave consequences if ozone depletion and global warming are not brought under control. Recently *Time* magazine devoted an entire issue to the matter, showing in frightening detail how the earth is being destroyed. It showed that much of the harm is done by the unchecked pollution of air, soil and water.

The many needs — and great greed — fuelling the world's economies are consuming creation's resources at a mindboggling rate. It appears that humanity is blithely stumbling over the edge. And lemming-like, leading the pack are the educated, affluent, industrial, Christianized societies of the West.

First to go, if scientists are to be believed, will be the wretched millions of Third-World poor who live in low-lying areas. Next to expire will be whatever life is left in underdeveloped countries. Last to go will be our great-grandchildren and their descendants. This doomsday scenario has the world committing mass suicide.

Standing on guard

A few months ago a report was published that named Ontario as third from the top in despoiling the environment. That report came out shortly after all of Ontario's nuclear energy plants had to be shut down.

Yet we Canadians sing about standing on guard for our country. That's possible in a democracy. And we ask God to keep our land glorious and free. How God might pull that off is not exactly clear. It will probably take a miracle. After all, what are gods for?

A role for the church

The Jewish exiles in ancient Babylon couldn't even sing. They just cried. Psalm 137 records that they sat down on the banks of Babylon's rivers and did just that. Remembering the good old days they wept.

Their captors demanded songs of joy about Zion, about Jerusalem the golden. But the exiles could only remember and weep. And since harps can't stand by themselves, they hung them on nearby trees. Willows, apparently. Weeping willows, probably. One wonders if that

might still be the proper role for the church today. Sit down and lament, oh, Jerusalem. Oh, polluted paradise! The Body of Christ: mainly militant internally, arguing about where to hang its harps.

The Committee for Contact with the Government (CCG), representing the Christian Reformed Church's Canadian classes, is mandated to take a different route. And so, after Ontario's sad pollution record was made public, the CCG decided to write Ontario's Premier Harris.

Here are excerpts from that letter: *Professing that our world belongs to God, members of our 104 Christian Reformed churches in Ontario are much troubled by media reports ranking the province third among North America's worst polluters.*

We would like to know how the government intends to deal with the difficult situation at Ontario Hydro. How will the necessary and urgent improvements be funded? And how will the vast projected cost of these measures affect your government's strategy vis-a-vis Ontario's embarrassing pollution record?

We noted with alarm that funding to the Ministry of the Environment has been reduced, these past two years, by 42 per cent! Of particular concern in this regard is the reduced funding available for cleaning up the Great Lakes, especially the cuts in moneys available for tackling the 16 most serious pollution spots on the Canadian side of the lakes.

At a time when Canada's provincial premiers are demanding greater powers from Ottawa and increased control over the environment, it would not be inappropriate for them to show evidence of incisive leadership in this area, and a clear commitment to dealing with environmental concerns.

The letter concluded by encouraging the premier to address the pollution issue without further delay and with the same urgency the province showed in handling its troubled nuclear energy program.

Remembering Zion sometimes prompts the asking of good questions.

Reinder Klein serves the CCG as research and communications associate.

Help for getting out of a prayer rut

Dear P & M:

*After reading some books on prayer, including *Passion and Power In Prayer*, I feel uncertain about repeating nearly the same words everyday. Despite my best efforts at concentration, my thoughts tend to wander. I know that psalms and hymns are used repetitively, but shouldn't spoken prayers have variation? The Lord invites us to come as children, but I find that hard to do as a mature adult. By the way, I have had the joyful experience of answered prayer!*

Dear Repetitive Prayers:

Repetition can be very comforting in its familiarity. Think of Psalm 23 and the Lord's Prayer. Think of the bedtime and mealtime prayers we learned as children. Still, all of us can relate to your experience. We all tend to get into a rut and fall back on the same words and phrases. When that results in boredom and wandering thoughts we need to make some changes to revitalize our prayer life.



for Little Hearts; Prayers for Young People; Prayers of the Heart; and The Prayers of Peter Marshall.

In the Anglican tradition, we recommend the *Book of Common Prayer*, which contains not only prayers both personal and liturgical, but references for daily Bible readings (the lectionary) and the Psalms.

CRC Publications, which published *Passion and Power in Prayer*, has several additional books which contain prayers. Check out these two: Leonard Vander Zee's *More Than Words*,

Peter and Marja

are
JN

which includes guided experiences in various forms of prayer and suggestions for keeping a personal journal; and *Patterns for Prayer*, which provides a regular, daily model for prayer which helps you pray for personal needs, family and friends, the church, the Kingdom and the unsaved for a whole year.

For many of us it has been liberating to learn conversational prayer. Like children talking to their parents, we are invited to talk to God about everything that is happening in our lives. It is encouraging to see this type of prayer in many families at the supper table where children are invited to contribute their own prayers in their own words.

But even conversational prayers can get into a rut. We still tend to start and end with the same stock phrases. We also tend to be very self-focused. That's when prayer resources and prayer lists can be incredibly helpful. A conscious decision to pray with different words for different persons and situations on different days can really break the devotional doldrums.

A prayer group also opens us up to other prayer concerns and styles. We may find ourselves outside of our comfort zones, especially if we find ourselves praying with more expressive individuals, but spiritual stretching can be good for us.

Your letter brought to mind a chapel on prayer during Peter's college days. A Calvin College professor recounted how he had found a sheet of paper on the floor in the hallway. It turned out to be a prayer list. In fact, it belonged to one of his own students. More amazingly still, as he scanned the list, included among the many others was his own name! He was deeply touched and encouraged by the fact that one of his students actually prayed for him in a very intentional way.

You've told us about your problem with repetitive prayer. Now tell God. He has given you the joyful experience of answering your prayers before. He will surely give you the joy of a more meaningful prayer life as you also take a more intentional approach in your devotions.

By the way, your letter is a real challenge to all of us. There is always room for improvement in the way we talk with God.

Write to: P & M, 16 Kimbermount Drive, St. Catharines, ON L2N 5V6.

Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of Herman de Jong, Bill Lidke, Alan Vandermaas, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.

DECEMBER 12, 1997

Books/Opinion

Restless Dutch youth worker kept the faith

Marian Van Til, with notes from Gabe Rienks

Twee minuten stilte voor de God van Tabe
(Two Minutes of Silence for the God of Tabe: The Story of the Life of Tabe Rienks)
As told in Dutch by Tabe and Gabe Rienks.

Amsterdam: Free University Publishing House, 1997. 200 pp., softcover. Available from Speelman's Bookhouse, Rexdale, Ont.: (416) 741-6563. Or: Family Christian Bookstore, Burlington, Ont.: (905) 637-9151. \$24.95 (Cdn).

The place is a youth centre in Amsterdam. The leader is a good friend of Tabe Rienks. The

polder. Receiving a card on his birthday with the text: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?", he pinned it above his bed.

With a "We'll see about that," his fellow workers carried his bed out of the barracks. Tabe spent that night under the open skies — and prayed. It was not the last time his faith and optimism would be challenged. But his faith never wavered.

Always for the underdog

After the liberation of the Netherlands Tabe went to Indonesia with the (Dutch) medical corps. He stayed in Indonesia after its independence in 1949, working for a Christian publishing house in Jakarta. In the meantime he had married a fine Christian woman, Johanna Pasanea.

He spent some time in an Indonesian prison for activities related to an illegal "alternative embassy" he and some friends set up to send Dutch-born immigrants back to the Netherlands.

Released in 1962, Tabe and his family moved back to the Netherlands where for the rest of his life he worked in Amsterdam as the YMCA's head youth leader among the young down-and-out.

Tabe always had a heart for the oppressed. When refugees from Suriname arrived and Tabe discovered their squalid living conditions, he became a squatter, occupying on behalf of the homeless houses that were empty and neglected.

Jesus, our friend

Then cancer began to take its terrible toll. On Tabe's last night on earth he, his wife and children sang gospel songs and hymns like "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," accompanied by his wife's guitar. He pronounced the singing wonderful and said, "Now we're all going to sleep peacefully." He arranged his pillow a little and fell asleep — in the arms of God.

Tabe Rienks grew up in Amsterdam under the Nazi occupation. At age 17 he went into hiding in a work camp in the



A sketch of Tabe Rienks

leader tells the boys at the centre, "Our friend Tabe is very sick. You know, I don't believe in God, but let's have two minutes of silence for Tabe's God."

This book presents the story of Tabe Rienks, the son of a Reformed Frisian family, told by his brother, Gabe. It begins in Indonesia during the chaotic years after the end of World War II, and moves to Amsterdam during the turbulent '60s and early '70s.

Tabe Rienks grew up in Amsterdam under the Nazi occupation. At age 17 he went into hiding in a work camp in the

Opinion

Jesus on the front page

Bert Hielema

They say in the publicity field that any news about a person is good, as long as the name is spelled correctly. Well, journalists have had no trouble with the name of Jesus lately. Remarkable: after 2,000 years certain controversial pronouncements about Jesus still make the headlines. Most famous persons today are totally forgotten after 2,000 hours.

What brought Jesus to the front page was some statements by the new moderator of the United Church, a church now more disunited than ever. A hybrid product, formed in 1925 from Presbyterians, Methodists and some congregational assemblies, the United Church is Canada's only home-grown denomination.

Often, when several different faith groups form a new church, the natural tendency is to dwell on what they have in common. As a consequence a rather bland product emerges, rather colorless and vague because it must appeal to the masses. This past summer we went to a United Church service in Magog, Quebec, in the Eastern Townships, and even though we were one of the few with a young family attached — we visited our daughter's family of five — not a single soul spoke to us and the sermon could have been interpreted any way.

Infighting

The United Church lacks color but not power struggles and infighting. A few months ago, while attending a conference in Toronto, I had lunch with a U.C. minister, who told me that seven out of the 14 churches in his presbytery had a minister-congregation conflict. The new moderator, the Right Reverend Bill Phipps, is adding to the turmoil, causing big waves in a church that has experienced some very stormy weather.

A decade ago, the hierarchy decided to ordain homosexual ministers, and that controversy hasn't died down yet. Now the new moderator is throwing another big boulder in the already stormy pond of church teachings. He denies Jesus' divinity.

I had seen him on Studio Two (TVO) and also read the full-page article in the FOCUS section of the *Globe and Mail*. "Jesus would never claim to be God. As a good Jew, Jesus would be appalled to think he was God," is a direct quote from the moderator. Here he exposes the fault line between the more conservative and the more liberal members of this divided church. Quite a number of congregations and even entire presbyteries have voted to dissociate themselves from the theological statements of the moderator, who is the titular head of the U.C. for one year.

Well, I am glad that Phipps has dared to bring into the open what has long simmered in the church. It is time that we deal honestly with matters of faith.

I, too, have a confession to make. No, I don't doubt Jesus' divinity: I am fully in agreement

with the doctrine of the Trinity and fully endorse Jesus' role as redeemer. How else can we be saved? However, I have a real question with the way the church confesses Jesus. By and large the orthodox wing of the Christian church dwells exclusively on Jesus' divinity and little or not at all on his humanity.

Forgetting Jesus' eternal humanity

Of course, nobody denies that Jesus dwelt among us mortals for some 30 years. Of course, all churches, especially at Christmas time, recall his birth, and nobody at Good Friday denies that he died and rose again at Easter. We are far too orthodox for that. I do not mean to sound negative here. However, if we believe that Jesus is God who is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, then his humanity is also part of that eternal state: because he was human once, he was and is and will be human always.

That is part of his mystery and a significant part of our salvation. Only in Jesus' permanent humanity can we approach him and understand him. Sure, Jesus is divine. But he also is human, which makes him humanly divine and divinely human. That is the part the church, especially the so-called orthodox wing, tends to forget. And I find that as great a heresy as denying his divine status. Strong language? So be it.

Why do I say this? I come on so strong because, in spite of confessing Jesus' permanent humanity, we almost always say that those departed in the Lord are with him in heaven, which then is proclaimed as their permanent abode. By saying this we, in fact, deny Jesus' humanity. The over-emphasis on mysticism in the Roman Catholic Church and the preoccupation with the Spirit in many Protestant churches is also an indication that Jesus' humanity is seen as not having great significance.

Hinged to his divinity

Actually by ignoring Jesus' eternal human condition, we deny his divinity as well. If we believe that we go to heaven, then we tacitly admit that God has failed in creation and that Jesus, too, is a failure. When we say that heaven is the perfect place for us, we also contradict the Bible, which throughout its pages emphasizes that God lives in inapproachable light: that nobody can see God or has seen him. When Jesus returns we will be like him, and he will be like us. That is our reward for looking after his creation until he comes.

So don't condemn this U.C. moderator too quickly when he says that Jesus is not divine. When we, in effect, deny Jesus' human state, and our ultimate perfect human state in the New Creation, then we commit exactly the same error.

Bert Hielema lives in Tweed, Ont.

groups, from Indonesia and Surinam, from Youth for Christ, and hippies, "Children of God," prostitutes, gang members, addicts. They were reluctant to come into the church because

they were not Christians, though eventually many were persuaded they were welcome. That crowd demonstrated Tabe's approach: "We're all children of one Father."

An interesting, touching story, particularly for the World War II generation.

Church

Conservative Reformed church group votes to oust CRC

URNS/Marian Van Til

ATLANTA — "Sad but inevitable," said Rev. Gordon Keddie, newly elected chairman of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC). Keddie was talking about NAPARC's 6-1 vote on Nov. 19 which began the process of suspending the Christian Reformed Church from this group of conservative denominations in the U.S. and Canada. Only the CRC voted against the motion.

The motion is now being presented to the national synods/general assemblies of the seven member denominations. If ratified by two-thirds of those churches within three years, the CRC will be ousted from an organization it helped start 23 years ago.

Rev. Rick Perrin, interchurch relations committee chair for the

Presbyterian Church in America, said the 1995 CRC vote to ordain women forced his denomination to propose suspension. Perrin sees only one scriptural view allowable on that issue, and that view denies women the right to be ordained. "In our opinion," said Perrin, "they are saying that Scripture no longer governs the CRC on that issue. We think that is a fundamental shift away from the historic position."

Fundamental shift?

But Perrin says that's not the only "problem" with the CRC.

"We are not suggesting that the Christian Reformed Church has suddenly ceased to be an evangelical body, nor are we saying its people are second-rate Christians," continued Perrin, who says that "aberrant views" are moved toward slowly and

subtly. "Those of you who deal with the insidious nature of a creeping away from the Reformed faith will know exactly what I'm talking about," asserted Perrin.

What's the point?

Rev. Leonard Hofman, interchurch relations administrative secretary of the CRC and former CRC General Secretary, took strong exception to that view.

"This is not a court. What are you hoping to achieve in a vote to suspend us?" asked Hofman. "Are you trying to discipline us? Do you have that right? We do not want to be accused or even described as giving in to a subtle cancer of an insidious nature that is pulling us away from the Word of God."

Hofman noted that he had attended NAPARC's 15 previous consecutive meetings and was

personally grieved by the proposal to suspend the CRC.

"Do we differ? Of course, we do," said Hofman. "I go back to the days when we had some real questions about the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and its view on the lodge. Tables have been shifted in these days."

After a lengthy debate about what the confessions say about ordination, about whether the CRC was actually violating conditions for NAPARC membership, and whether there were legitimate grounds to suspend the denomination, it was decided that by ordaining women the CRC is allowing in office "those who do not meet the qualifications established by Scripture" — grounds for NAPARC suspension.

Wrong focus

Hofman closed the debate

with a personal word, noting that his own adult daughter had recently told her parents that she had decided to prepare for the Christian Reformed ministry. "I'm just wondering what will happen when your daughter comes to you and says something like that," said Hofman.

At the adjournment of NAPARC, Dr. David Engelhard, CRC general secretary, left his own parting word regarding the organization's future. "I think we should express our sadness that things have come to this point, and wish you well," said Engelhard. "For the three years we have been here, NAPARC has focused on keeping the EPC [Evangelical Presbyterian Church] out and putting the CRC out. That is not a good focus. It is our hope that NAPARC can now focus on other matters."

Conservative Reformed churches meet in Korea

Business focusses on in-house relations

Marian Van Til, based on notes from URNS

SEOUL, South Korea — The International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC) met for its quadrennial meeting in Seoul in mid-October and considered mainly internal "house-keeping" matters. This small group of Reformed churches is a conservative counterpart to the moderate Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC), of which the Christian Reformed Church is a member.

The ICRC began in the Netherlands among denominations following Klaas Schilder's theology but this year's chairperson was a Korean seminary president, Dr. Soon Gil Hur, whose denomination of 400,000

is by far the largest in the ICRC.

Among its first business the ICRC admitted seven new denominations, increasing its size by a third, to 21 from 14 members. Most of the new denominations are groups which previously pulled out of the REC due to concerns over ordaining women.

However, even one new potential ICRC member came under fire for not being sufficiently "Reformed." The (American) Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church was criticized for its "toleration" of Freemasonry and a "history of Barthianism".

Maintaining 'purity'

In response, ARPC representative Rev. Jack Whytock assured delegates that "from 1978 onwards there has been a change of direction of the synod" — a

conservative shift.

"We have removed ourselves from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches [WARC], and we have been an active participant in the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council [NAPARC]," said Whytock. (The Christian Reformed Church has opted not to join WARC and was recently ousted from NAPARC — see story elsewhere on this page). Though that didn't satisfy all delegates, the ARPC was eventually admitted into the ICRC by a 16 to 3 vote.

In other business, the ICRC discussed to what extent all its members must agree doctrinally with each other, and whether differences should affect fellowship. Member churches are committed to the "Three Forms of Unity" and the Westminster Standards.

The ICRC voted to suggest that each member denomination adopt a policy specifying that

"when a matter arises that would affect the relationship of the ICRC member churches to each other, such as a change being contemplated by a church in its doctrinal basis or ethical practices," the denomination should take three steps: inform the other denominations' interchurch relations committees, ask for their denominations' official positions, advice, and help, and keep the other churches informed of developments.

Conservatives inclined to 'go it alone'

Orthodox Presbyterian delegate Rev. John Galbraith admitted that the tendency to "go it alone" is a serious problem in fellowships of conservative churches and can easily lead a conservative church to become something quite different due to lack of opportunities for mutual admonition.

"All of us really are the result of separation so we felt alone,

there's nobody beside us to help us so we go it alone, and that's exactly what we do, we go it alone," said Galbraith.

Related to ecclesiastical fellowship among denominations the OPC also admitted that it "flunked the test" of dealing with the Christian Reformed Church (with which it severed relations in June 1997) and wants to avoid making the same set of mistakes again.

OPC interchurch relations committee chair Rev. Jack Peterson said that as a result of its experience dealing with the CRC, the OPC intends to establish three tiers of relations with other churches: an entry level, a restricted fellowship, and finally full fellowship, and sought the advice of other ICRC members on whether this is a good method to handle ecclesiastical relations.

Looking for reaction and advice, the OPC got a mixed bag. Korean delegates weren't enthusiastic, saying it might not work in non-English-speaking churches and Asian cultures.

In other interchurch relations matters, the ICRC urged the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, which have withdrawn from the ICRC, to return to membership.

The next ICRC meeting will be hosted in the year 2001 by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church at a location and date to be determined.

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Church

'Where are you staying, Jesus?'

In John's telling of the calling of Andrew to be a disciple, there is a brief interchange between Andrew and Jesus. Andrew has been a disciple of John the Baptist. He has heard John say of Jesus that he is the "Lamb of God." He understands this to be a Messianic title. So one day he and a friend follow Jesus when he leaves the crowd around John. When Jesus notices their presence, the dialogue begins. "What are you looking for?" he asks them.

What are you looking for? A friend of mine recently went on a guided retreat on which he was required to meditate for several days on this question. He came home still unsure of the answer. In the gospels, Jesus often begins his interactions with people with a question like this: "What do you want?" he may ask of some blind or crippled person brought to him for healing. Jesus does not assume the obvious answer. He requires those who come to him to articulate their need for him. Perhaps healing is not what is really needed. Perhaps it is forgiveness. Perhaps it is understanding. Perhaps it is the will to be obedient.

Can't ignore the question

The season of Advent poses this same question to us. What are we looking for? In the season of expectation, what is it for which we wait? What hopes and fears do we carry as we anticipate the return of Christ in glory? As we approach the baby in the manger?

Some of us look for healing. Some hope for an end to emotional pain. Some would just like a few moments of rest and calm. Some, like my friend, feel a vague sense of want but are unsure of the exact object of our desire. Jesus poses the question and waits to hear our answer.

Andrew and his friend come up with a pretty good answer, though it probably felt rather inadequate as they said it. "Rabbi," they answer, "where are you staying?" They make no mention of any need of theirs. They simply want to know more about this man Jesus. They want to see where he lives. They want to enter his life. They want to be near him. They have no particular service which they want him to perform. They want him, himself.

Behind all our other needs, wants and demands, that desire is always present — the desire for contact with God himself. It is a desire which we may ignore or deny. We may analyze it away as wishful thinking or nostalgia. We may stifle it, and over a life-time we may almost extinguish it. But this desire is implanted in us as part of our created nature, and it will never fully go away.

For those aware of their desire to contact Jesus, Andrew's question still presses. "Jesus,

Chapter & Verse



Wayne Brouwer
Andrew Kuyvenhoven
● Laura Smit
Al Wolters

in this messed up and fractured world, where are you staying?"

'Come and see'

Jesus gives an answer which really introduces the rest of the narrative of John: "Come and see." For the rest of the gospel, we will discover the answer not only for first century Palestine, but also for ourselves today. At the beginning of his gospel, John tells us that in the incarnation we have seen, for "we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth." Toward the end of the gospel, in the 14th chapter, John tells us that on the night before Jesus' death Philip asked to be shown the Father. Jesus answers: "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father." As we read the gospel of John, as we read all the Scriptures, we come and we see.

Andrew is not content to merely see for himself. He needs to share his new knowledge with his brother, Simon. Immediately after telling of Andrew's call, John tells us that Philip, once he was called by Jesus, felt the same impulse to share the news. He went to find Nathaniel and gave him Jesus' invitation: "Come and see."

Leading others to the Answer

The dialogue of discipleship requires not only that we follow Jesus ourselves, but also that we lead others into an encounter with him. In the Anglican and Episcopal churches, the prayer for the Feast of St. Andrew makes reference both to the response of following Jesus and to the response of sharing him with others.

Almighty God, who didst give such grace to thine Apostle Andrew that he readily obeyed the call of thy Son Jesus Christ, and brought his brother with him: Give unto us, who are called by thy Word, grace to follow him without delay, and to bring those near to us into his gracious presence; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

This Christmas, may your eyes be opened to find God as a baby in a manger, and may you be used to usher those near to you into that gracious presence.

Laura Smit is a pastor in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), who is currently doing doctoral studies in philosophical aesthetics at Boston University, Boston, Mass.

Alberta churches benefit from gambling

CALGARY — Long in the forefront of the Canadian fight against gambling, some Alberta churches have actually been enjoying the proceeds of gambling for the past five years, reports *Christian Week*.

Calgary pastor Jim Wallace

revealed that he learned from government documents that at least 100 Alberta churches have received gambling funds. Wallace criticizes them for what he calls their hypocrisy.

Information from the Alberta Gaming Commission indicates

that from January 1993 to the present, churches have received \$3,669,022 in gambling revenues. The list includes Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, United, Orthodox, Presbyterian, Alliance and Church of God congregations.

Charismatic leader John Wimber dies

Founded influential Vineyard churches

SANTA ANA, Calif. (EP) — John Wimber, one of the most colorful and controversial leaders of the charismatic movement in the U.S., suffered a massive brain hemorrhage Nov. 16 while recovering from triple bypass surgery, and passed away peacefully the following morning in the presence of his family. He was 63.

Wimber was a pastor with Chuck Smith's Calvary Chapel movement, but left in 1977 over a theological disagreement. He founded what is now the Association of Vineyard Churches, which has 450 congregations in the U.S. and 250 more around the world.

Wimber took the name for the group from another Calvary Chapel affiliate founded by Ken Gulliksen, whose church was then called Vineyard Christian Fellowship. When Gulliksen joined Wimber, he brought the name with him. (Gulliksen has since left the Vineyard Movement and now pastors an independent church in Los Angeles.)

Powerful and intelligent Christian

Wimber, who had been a keyboard player with the Righteous Brothers, went on to become an international conference speaker, worship songwriter, best-selling author and spiritual leader to the worldwide Vineyard movement. He was also the senior pastor of the Anaheim Vineyard Christian Fellowship for 17 years, from 1977 to 1994.

Wimber was a frequent news-maker, most recently for "cutting free" the Toronto Airport Vineyard in a doctrinal dispute. Wimber taught "signs and wonders" classes at the School of World Missions at Fuller Theological Seminary, and led Vineyard rallies around the world.

Southern California broadcaster Rich Buhler, who was a close friend of Wimber's and also helped to produce his radio show, "Equipping the Saints," for nearly a year, told British journalist Dan Wooding, "I'm going to miss him. He was an inspiration to me as a very real and down to earth yet powerful and intelligent Christian. He inspired multitudes of people to serve Christ and to seek the Kingdom and I will remember him also as a person who inspired those same multitudes to get very serious in ministry to the poor."

'Kingdom stuff'

Buhler, who runs Branches Communications in Orange, California, added, "He was known for his 'Power Evangelism,' but the Vineyards had multiplied millions of dollars for the poor as he talked about 'doing the stuff.' This was one of his favorite phrases and he would say that this was what Jesus would do. He meant, of course, things like evangelism, casting out demons and feeding the poor. That was the Kingdom 'stuff' to John. Just a week or two before he died, the Anaheim Vineyard took an offering of \$750,000 for the poor. That was something he didn't get as much publicity for."

"The other thing I liked about John was he was very candid and down to earth. He didn't like being an over-powerful person. He liked just being John. He was disarmingly honest in both private conversation and public discourse. He would talk about what was going on in his personal life. I can't tell you how many times we in the church sat in the congregation and learned about the struggles in his own life. He never held himself up as a standard for people to focus on. John Wimber just did 'the stuff'!"

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Feature

'What can I give Him?'

Jacoba Bos

"But Mommy, you said I can wear my blue dress, you promised," Sara pleaded.

"I'm sorry, Sara, I guess I just wasn't paying attention," Michelle said as she hung the offending dress back in the large walk-in closet, pushing aside rows of little girl's clothes in colorful array. "Your blue dress; let's see if we can find it. Oh, here it is."

She walked back to the canopy bed where four-year-old Sara was playing with her teddy bear family. "You have a good day at the babysitters now. Bye, I love you," the little girl said to the smallest bear, walking her across the silk bedspread to an imaginary building at the foot of the bed. A quick kiss on the bear's fuzzy head ended the hasty farewell.

Sara turned to her mother. "See, Mommy, she's being a good girl; she's gonna get lots and lots of presents from Santa Claus, aren't you Baby Bear?" She looked intently into the beady eyes as if expecting an answer.

"Yes, she is a good bear," Michelle said impatiently as she pulled the blue velvet dress over her daughter's unco-operative head. Sara's cries of "Mommy, you're hurting my ears" were met with a short, "Hush, honey, I'm only trying to get both of us ready for church in time."

"Why can't Daddy come to church with us, Mom?" Sara asked as Michelle pulled up the zipper on her daughter's dress and tied the sash into a big bow. Michelle searched for a hairbrush while her mind searched for the right answer.

"Daddy's not even home, honey; he's real busy at work, so that's why he can't come to church with us," she said softly.

"Daddy's always busy, isn't he, Mommy? Even busier than you, hey Mommy? My babysitter says that you're so busy cause you're a smart cookie. What's a smart cookie, Mom? Oh, I know it's a cookie with a face made of Smarties, right Mom?"



...She remembered Sundays filled with family gatherings...

"Yes, it could be that; but it could also mean a person who has learned a lot in schools and colleges. Just like you when you'll go to school. And guess what? Today you'll be going to Sunday school," Michelle said, grateful for the opportunity to familiarize her daughter with the coming event of the day.

Together they walked down the stairs into the spacious hallway where a glossy flyer lay like a colored leaf on the thick carpet. "The Big Question this Christmas is what to give" was splashed across the front page, with the promise of answers for gift problems for "Those we love who have everything."

"Stand still now, Sweetheart, we're almost done. There, now you look pretty," Michelle said as she brushed Sara's long blonde hair. Sara twirled around like a China doll on a music box, her hair shining in the reflected light of the mirrored walls of the pink powder room. Sara had inherited her mother's fine features and the inquisitive eyes of her father's side of the family. Michelle saw again the resemblance to her mother-in-law, a divorcee who, in an at-

tempt to make friends with the rich and famous, was trying to fill her empty life with luxurious trips to far away places.

"You've got to live a little, meet some fun people, go to fun places, do some fun things, do what you want. You don't always have to be decent," she had said on her last whirlwind visit.

"I'd die if I had to live in this town. It doesn't even have a bar," she had said disdainfully to her son and daughter-in-law shortly after they had moved with little Sara into an expensive new home in a recently developed suburb of Bornsville, Ontario.

"I don't like it anymore than you do, Tine," Mark had said to his mother. "But what can I do when my company moves me around? Besides that," he added with a smirk on his face, "my wife will be happy here because there's a church in the neighborhood." His remark had stung Michelle but she had managed to hide her feelings from her mother-in-law.

"Mommy, I wanna wear my silver earrings, the ones Daddy bought for me in Paris. You said

I could wear them when we go out together, so can I Mommy, please?"

"Yes, that's what I told you," Michelle said, "so I'll run upstairs and get them while you set the table for the two of us, okay?"

While rummaging through the jewelry box in her daughter's bedroom, Michelle's thoughts went back to the time when she was a little girl and life was so much simpler. She thought about a Sunday dress she had had with lace collar and pearl buttons, a hand-me-down from her older sister, and the handknitted knee socks that were a birthday gift from her grandmother. She remembered Sundays filled with family gatherings, church services and rules and regulations she had balked at in her teenage years and now longed for in her married life. If only Mark was from the same background, she thought wistfully.

Michelle raced down the stairs again, her stocking feet barely touching the stairs. "Here are your earrings." She carefully attached the fine jewelry to her daughter's ears. "Now let's have some breakfast."

When the twosome arrived at church, the parking lot was nearly full. A grey-haired gentleman directed her to an open space and welcomed them with a cheerful, "Good morning! Looks like you're new around here. Can you find your way?" He then led the way into the building, past the nursery where anxious mothers and tearful babies were about to part ways, past the council room where they could see several men involved in an animated discussion, and into the sanctuary where Michelle felt many eyes on her and Sara as the usher found them a place near the front.

"Look Mommy, candles!" Sara said excitedly, pointing to the Advent candles burning brightly on an evergreen wreath. Michelle put her finger to her lips. "We have to be quiet in church," she whispered.

When the pastor came in and the large congregation rose to sing "O, Come, O, Come, Immanuel," a wave of emotion and longing for the peace of the Christ Child swept over Michelle.

When it was time for the children's story, the pastor joined the pre-schoolers who had gathered on the floor in front of the pulpit. Sara sat next

to him, her velvet dress spread around her like a shiny tent, her eyes raised expectantly to the young man. After the pint-sized worshippers had settled down enough to listen, the pastor stood up in the middle of them and asked: "Who can reach me now and give me a hug?" Eighteen pairs of eyes looked up and scaled the pastor's six-foot-plus frame.

"No, you're too long," one brave youngster answered, garnering a smile from the congregation.

"That's right," the pastor answered. "You can't reach me because I'm too far away from you." He then sat down on the worn carpet with the children around him. "Now can you give me a hug?" he asked. Four little arms wrapped themselves around his neck.

"See?" the pastor said, after he'd freed himself from the enthusiastic embraces. "That's how Jesus came down to us on the first Christmas. We could not reach him, but he came to give us a hug and to say, 'I love you.' And what can we do for him?" His eyes searched the group for an answer.

"Give him a hug," Sara's voice was loud and clear.

"Right on, little girl," the minister beamed. "Jesus wants us to give him our love because he came to give us his love at Christmas and always."

After the children had left the sanctuary, Michelle tried to concentrate on the sermon but in spite of the pastor's enthusiasm and biblical insight, she found it difficult to take in the message.

On the way home Sara chatted constantly about her experiences at Sunday school. "And my teacher says you have to help me to learn this," she concluded her monologue. She pulled a crumpled paper from her coat pocket. "See, it's a song, it's about what we give," the teacher said. "I know the whole thing already," she continued proudly. "It goes like this: *What can I give Him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb; If I were a wiseman I would do my part. What can I give him? — give my heart.*

Michelle found herself singing along as she drove to their empty home in the grayness of an early December day.

Feature

Going to the Toko, you may discover more about your mysterious self than you knew before, or perhaps wanted to.

Standing before the meat counter, ordering *boterham worst*, the worst for *boerenkool*, or asking one of the two women to lift a wheel of cheese from the cheese fridge, which she then sets on a table, built a little too high, so that she must stand on her toes to put sufficient shoulder behind the curved, two-handled knife, which slides reluctantly through the hard *Gouda*...

Gouda. Its half-horked g-sound is such an oral pleasure. Here you don't have to anglicize in order to be understood, as you do downtown in the Farmer's Market. That's the first clue.

Clue two is how abruptly familiar and exotic, both, the inside of the Toko is. If you've lately neglected this far north-end of the dreary indoor Mountain Plaza, you might now recognize the place such smells and tastes have in the soul, not only the heart, or the mouth, where the spiced tang of *pepermunten*, true as the bite of the North Sea blowing through an open window, is contained in the small room of tongue and teeth, and is very sweet.

How it must have changed their lives when the shipped spices first entered the homes of the Dutch, when nutmeg first was grated over green beans, or Faam and King began to spar for allegiance in the pews...

though by the time they have sailed the generations to take up official residence in your soul, all brandname quarrels have been put aside, melting into an inconsequential sliver, so that now, somewhere in my soul, where I'm looking to get this right, is the third clue, about the size of a *Canadese* nickel, balancing on its narrow edge: the simple, whole white disk, which I would ask Mom to give me one of, just as the communion plate came by that held the precise white squares of crustless bread the adults held so dear they each took only one of, and gripped

between their thumb and forefinger, waiting till everyone in that big crowded building had the piece they guided to their mouths, on cue, together, in the hushed rustle of best Sunday clothing, then silently chewed; contemplative, or simply blank — impossible to say.

Oral pleasures

by John Terpstra



Thankful, penitent, unregenerate.

At the Toko, they'd know. And possibly tell you. Sometimes the women can't help right away, or when they do pay scant attention as they slip your wishes, like a single slice of *rooklees* falling from the rolling guillotine, between the *hapjes* of fresh information they meanwhile are feeding each other,

but who can mind?

You're being served. Clue four is impaled on the end of a toothpick held between thumb and forefinger: the sample, *stukje*, salty or sweet, that's poised to enter your small room of tongue and teeth,

and which will draw, on its brief journey through the air, a shape like a question mark to punctuate the tidbit facts, facts you overhear, to which it may or not mysteriously relate; or some richer delicacy, imported from theirs or yours or others' lives, and that you freely, in turn, offer and exchange, innocent of all intent.

Such oral pleasures.

Everything comes in packages, from far away: The wedge of *nagelkaas*, wrapped in waxpaper, and taped; *beschuit* silos, slipped in cellophane thin as silk; the bright rolls of *Rang*. A former kind of Paradise proffers its arresting smells and tastes.

Each good drawn from the shelves, examined at various angles, and placed in the wire basket, is highly valued — the short pile, emptied before the cash register, very dear.

And they will always know more about your mysterious self, here, than you care to know.

Clue five, is the blue logo'd bag with the windmill printed on, reaching out its arms like the ancient, native tree, hanging today's picking. Down the corridor, a common burden swings in step beside your legs. And through the wide glass doors, where, as you slowly flee the dreary inexcusable mall to enter their domain, the immigrant sun and North Sea cloud embrace your late arrival.

Feature

A night at Van Andel Arena

Ty Hofman

I have been excited by hockey for many years. I remember when we got our first radio in the mid-thirties, a large upright one, powered by a huge cabinet full of batteries that by today's standards could power an electric automobile. It took so much juice that our listening



Andy Kuyvenhoven

the heroics of Turk Broda stopping every puck which came his way, with his bare face, if needed.

Today I wouldn't trade those memories for a season ticket to Maple Leaf Gardens. But, at 74, I'm still pulling for the Maple Leafs.

So it is not a surprise that I was excited when Grand Rapids got its fine Van Andel Arena and its IHL Griffins, in a league just one cut below the NHL. And no surprise that I attended a few games this past season, usually the guest of my son Ron, who caught the hockey bug as a boy in Calgary in the '50s. It's also no surprise that I and my friend Andy Kuyvenhoven can, at times, be found at the arena, pulling for the Griffins and hoping the noise will not make it impossible for us to comment on the hockey and "talk some church."

● ● ●

Andy and I attended a recent playoff game. Upon entering the arena we were greeted with the gift of celebrative miniature pompoms, in Griffin dark blue and glittering gold, designed for "waving" our support for the team. (Can't you just see two retired pastors with pompoms?). Grinning somewhat sheepishly at each other we decided to make the best of our little windfalls and we waved our way through the milling crowd.

Walking through the service areas we were struck by the number of people already deep into their first, large \$4 beer, with lines of others waiting to be served. Having mistakenly arrived a half-hour too early, we had lots of time to observe the developing scene. We finally found our \$8 seats rather high in a corner and began watching the sell-out crowd stream in.

I saw people in all the amazing variety of God's creating, no two alike: large and small, short and tall, plump and thin, young and old; some handsome and beautiful, others plain; and everything in between; some well-dressed and others absurdly bedecked, along with those who never take their baseball caps off. I wondered what the people behind us were thinking, seeing two old guys with their pompoms. Our row started filling up. A strapping young fellow squeezed through in front of us, followed by his date, a blonde in a short skirt, whose seat was next to mine.

Soon the Griffins mascot skated onto the ice to rev up the crowd, a cheer leader and motivator of joyful participation in the glories of supporting the Grand Rapids Griffins hockey fortunes. He waved his pompom and we all waved back, and many shouted their enthusiasm. We revelled in being part of the successful launching of IHL hockey in Grand Rapids. We were in the playoffs and leading the series with the Solar Bears of Orlando, 2-0. Things were really moving and shaking. It was impossible not to be enthusiastic.

The blonde next to me wondered where I'd bought my pompom. She felt left out without one. I assured her they were free, likely while the supply lasted. She had obviously arrived too late to share in the largesse of management. So I very generously offered her the use of mine, with the firm understanding that I wanted it back to give to my grandchildren. That was fine with her. And it was fine with me, since now I was relieved of my duty of waving the pompom and could give my whole attention to taking in the scene. I think that by that time Andy had put his under his arm.

I noticed a father with three children moving into the row



Ty Hofman

seem to come mainly for the hoopla of the successful and constantly sold out arena and for the good fights that are part of the franchise. The father was obviously not a serious follower of the game or he wouldn't have taken three kids along.

As one might have expected, "Father" was soon on his way out with the "Baby." He likely went to change a diaper in one of the beautiful arena rest rooms equipped with changing tables and all that goes with that kind of thing. When he came back he navigated his way past all the knees and feet in the row where he was seated, with the baby in one arm and a huge mug full of beer in his other hand.

In the \$8-section there isn't much space between your extremities and the seat ahead of you. I was relieved when he completed the trip without splashing beer on the patrons in front of him. At this point he settled down to the full-time job of keeping his boys happy and doing justice to his beer.

● ● ●

I have several problems with modernity. One of them is the insistence of those in charge of public sporting events to force us to really enjoy their product by increasing the volume of their communication. As usual the music was so raucous and blaring that Andy and I couldn't exchange ideas from the store of our hockey wisdom.

This was exacerbated by the fact that my hearing isn't what it used to be and I'm too proud to wear a hearing aid, plus the fact that my voice is only a whisper compared to what it used to be. So neither of us could hear the other unless we made "ear horns" with both hands.

The public announcer, as usual, screamed so enthusiastically that I found it impossible to hear who were the members of the starting line-up. But Pokey Reddick was in goal. I knew that because he is always in goal, and he takes his children to my son Ron the pediatrician.

The music doesn't quit until the linesman drops the puck, and even then they stop it with great reluctance. I've talked to the management about it but, like in the church, we old timers aren't calling the shots.

I asked Blondie if she often watched hockey. "No," she said. This was her second game. She was from Nebraska where they don't play much hockey. But I could ask her anything about

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"Things were really moving and shaking. It was impossible not to be enthusiastic."

FOCUS ON SPORTS

football and she could tell me all about it. I told her I'd been a hockey fan for 60 years. With that I concluded I'd given her plenty of reason to respect my opinions, but learning about hockey wasn't high on her list of priorities.

• • •

After the first period Andy and I reflected on the father with his three sons. Andy pointed out that he had a father with three children sitting to his left, also without a mother. We wondered where mother might be. Maybe she didn't like hockey. Maybe she needed a break at home. Maybe she was working. Maybe father was having the children according to custodial arrangements.

The father ahead of me seemed like a good dad. He did look a bit scruffy and he was in style with the seemingly obligatory baseball cap glued to his head, but he was attentive to his children. He didn't get upset, though he was being disturbed rather frequently to minister to the needs of his boys. Maybe that's why he smiled gratefully when the people to his left passed him another mug of beer.

Andy treated me with Fisherman's Friend lozenges and I him with King peppermints. (Be sure to see Dick Eppinga for a roll if ever you visit Calvin Seminary.)

Meanwhile Blondie's boyfriend also brought in two mugs of beer. I had thought she was a bit too young and nice to drink beer but she handled it like a veteran. They also took care of a huge bucket of popcorn. That didn't impress me either because, though I like popcorn, I can't stand the smell of it when

someone else is eating it.

After the second period we went out for a break. There were long lines in the restroom though the facilities were built to handle a large crowd. And, amazingly, several patrons first went for another mug of beer and then made it to the restroom. A matter of the order of priorities, I suppose. First the important things, then the necessary.

The third period was more of the same. The father to my front-right had another beer and his boys also had their felt needs ministered to. Blondie considered it her turn to buy and put \$10 into the hand of her date and he brought another round of beer.

I wondered what they thought of the two old guys to her left who hadn't bought any refreshments. It was not that we have anything against a refresher but our stewardship just doesn't allow that level of investment. And it is my testimony against the indulgent lifestyle of the sporting fraternity.

• • •

Halfway through the last period the father to my front-right assessed his situation, picked up his toddler and led his boys out of the arena. It was time to go home. It apparently was not very important to him who won the game. And the Griffins were a goal behind. (We both wondered whether, after three mugs of beer, he'd be able to pass a breathalyzer test.) He was the only one to depart early.

At the final buzzer, Blondie and her boyfriend went for the exits while we lingered to wait for the crowd to thin down. She

returned my pompom and as she passed in front of me he said, "See you later." I concluded he was likely a pretty decent fellow who had trouble communicating meaningfully, for "later" will likely not be till the resurrection.

I should mention that the Griffins lost. And we went home with our pompoms.

• • •

On further reflection I began to wonder just how I relate to this crowd of arena goers. Not only are they my fellow human beings but they are my neighbors. This crowd represents the people of the highways and byways who somehow must be invited into the Kingdom of God. How will I go about reaching them with the good news? Especially when there is so little opportunity to relate to any of them, when hockey and beer seems to be the only concern of their lives.

Of course there were undoubtedly many Christians there too, maybe Christian Reformed people like us, enjoying a hockey game. But for many of those who formed the crowd, life was being lived on the level of pleasure. And for us, seeking the Kingdom, it was like ships passing in the night.

So the great question remains: How will I reach my neighbor for the sake of the Kingdom? Not just at a hockey game, but in all the crowds we encounter as we walk the byways of daily living. I do know it must begin at the point where I sense the real humanity I share with my neighbors, near or far.

Ty Hofman is a retired Christian Reformed pastor who lives in Grand Rapids, Mich.

After the Buzzer

00:00



Tim Antonides

'Iron Mike' comes to town

Vancouver is a weird place. Politically, socially, economically, morally. In the world of sports it's downright bizarre. I can say that because I have a West Coast slant on things. I live here. As I've mentioned once or twice, I've endured humiliation Canuck-style. I've watched the Lions fumble and stumble their way to the CFL cellar more than a few times. I have to say, the Grizzlies put on a great show. But unfortunately, only at half-time when "Super Grizz" (the mascot) does a flying dunk off a trampoline. We're used to losing out here.

Still, the events of the past few weeks in the Vancouver Canucks organization have been the best show of all: comedy, drama, irony, betrayal. It's had it all. We laughed, we cried, we traded in our season's tickets. Let me tell you the story.

Too loyal?

Pat Quinn coached the Canucks for a number of years. He was also general manager for some time. Back in '94, he took them to the Stanley Cup Finals as head coach. Later on, someone else took his place and Quinn focussed on being general manager. Since the glory days of '94, the Canucks have been roasted mercilessly for their poor performance in general, and for the grossly inadequate play of their highly paid "stars" in particular.

A few weeks ago, the top blew off. The Canucks fired Pat Quinn. Why? They said he was too loyal. He believed too much in certain people. He was too forgiving and too patient with players and coaches who weren't producing right away.

The solution was Mike Keenan. Anyone with any sort of hockey knowledge knows who Iron Mike is. They also know a few adjectives to describe him: cold, unforgiving, blunt, arrogant. He is touted in the media as a guy who hates everyone — a guy who doesn't care what anyone thinks of him. Only one thing matters to Mike: winning at all costs. The headline "Keenan Coming to Vancouver" brought instant relief to hockey fans out here.

Rewarding arrogance

I felt that way too. "Zero tolerance"; "No messing around"; "Getting down to business" — those are all strong cliches that I've always enjoyed. This enjoyment is shared by thousands of weary Canuck fans who are fed up with pathetic, lazy hockey.

The part I don't get is this: Why do people respect arrogance and callousness? Many hockey fans don't like Keenan, but they do respect him. It's partly because he's disciplined and tenacious. Yet it's also because he doesn't care who he hurts or what others think of him. Anyone who stands in his way is fair game. He's a proven winner and nothing else matters, they say.

John McEnroe, Dennis Rodman, Deon Sanders, Mike Keenan: obnoxious, defiant, outrageous, abrasive to the core. These guys have been respected by many fans (especially kids).

What's happening? Are we losing every measure of class and civility? Should we honor those who bark the loudest? I'm tired of sports fans and the media rewarding arrogance.

Romans 12 speaks volumes: "Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment.... Live at peace with everyone."

Is this so much to ask? I have a hard time believing that if fans got tired of athletes and coaches acting like whiny, tantrum-throwing preschoolers we wouldn't see some sort of increase in civility in pro sports.

Sorry, Mike. You've won a few games. What we need, though, is people in the sports field who we can respect for their commitment to the sport, their skill and their conduct.

Tim Antonides teaches Grade 5 and coaches at Surrey Christian School, Surrey, B.C.

Church press quotes



Rev. Jacob Kuntz

Vision TV

Vision TV is one of the stations which most of "our people" like to watch. It has (some) good religious programs, good music and healthy entertainment.

In Rogers' latest cable changes Vision TV was bumped from channel 24 to channel 59. That upset many TV watchers, many of whom cannot even get channel 59, especially in apartment buildings.

The Anglican Journal of November 1997 had a short article about it. We quote:

"The problem is channel 59 is used to monitor security systems — including those run by Rogers — in about 645 apartment complexes. Compounding the problem is the fact that 13 per cent of Vision viewers have televisions that don't receive channels higher than 36.

"Vision officials think they are being treated unfairly because of the nature of their programming. 'There is a false perception that we are a marginal service,' said Fil Fraser, president and CEO of Vision. 'The fact is that in the ratings last spring of prime time viewing of specialty channels we were well ahead of Showcase, Much Music and the Women's Network.'

After 10 years in operation, Vision TV is, according to its president, consistently in the top five in viewership of English-language specialty channels, alongside CBC Newsworld, TSN, Discovery and YTV.

"But Rogers, which controls most of the cable access around Toronto, said Vision's move is simply business as usual.

"We don't like to do this, to move channels around the dial," said Jan Innis, vice-president of communications. "We try to make it as unobtrusive as possible for our viewers."

"Not only does Vision expect its advertising revenues to be adversely affected, as they are usually indexed to viewership numbers, but many people especially shut-ins who typically live in apartment complexes, will no longer have what Mr. Fraser calls 'a safe place on the dial that doesn't have anything gratuitous going on, whether sex or violence or whatever.'

"But the last word may not be written. In an Oct. 10 letter from Joel Davidson, Rogers' executive vice-president of marketing, Rogers agreed to offer special converters for an extra \$6.45 per month (plus taxes), 'allowing them to tune in to Vision TV in its new location.' Subscribers will get the first three months free if they contact Rogers between Oct. 17 and Dec. 31 to order the gadget. And, Mr. Davidson writes that 'if the building owner decides to change the (channel) location of the security camera, we will handle these requests on a case-by-case basis.'

"Our expression of gratitude for what God has done for us through Christ should be a life of service, a life of giving back," said the former lawyer and businessman who built the first Habitat home for the poor in rural Georgia 21 years ago. Fuller is a one-time millionaire who gave away his fortune to build houses for the poor.

"On Sept. 20, the worldwide non-profit organization was to begin work on home number 60,000 in Texas.

"Fuller noted that Christ used a hammer as a carpenter and that it also was the tool used to nail Christ to the cross. 'But we can use that simple tool of the con-

struction trade to bring people together,' to heal language religious or political divisions.

"The concept behind Habitat for Humanity is simple but profound, and it comes from God, he said. It's that 'everybody that can sleep at night ought to have a decent place in which to sleep.'

"With donations of land, building materials and money, and with volunteers Habitat for Humanity builds houses and sells them with no interest charges and without receiving a profit. The low-income family that wants to buy the home must be approved after a screening process."

The United Church Observer wrote about Habitat for Humanity (Nov. '97):

"It was just about twilight the other night as I drove past Gaby and Harvey's new home: the living room light was on, maybe the kitchen lights too, and I felt my spirits lifted. This house, a few blocks from my own in Mississauga, Ont., is something of a miracle.

"One September morning, the lot contained only a foundation

and lots of volunteers in hardhats and toolbelts milling around. By the next Saturday the house was up, finished inside and out, and the front yard was overflowing onto the sidewalk, this time with people who'd helped build it and had come to dedicate it.

"Among them were Gabriele Kremnitz and her 13-year-old son, Harvey. Gaby, who came to Ontario from Alberta after her husband was killed in a car accident 12 years ago, had wanted a house for a long time. Then she found out about Habitat for Humanity. Her house, one of 100 built worldwide by Habitat volunteers during a special 'Building on Faith' week, didn't come easily. In 1994, she and Harvey began putting in their 500 hours of 'sweat equity,' the required down payment. They also had to be approved by a selection committee and be able to pay a no-interest, geared-to-income mortgage.

"Habitat, which began its work in 1976, built its 60,000th home during that week. It is worth looking at as a model when church folk ponder how they are going to move social-justice work ahead."

The Salvation Army's red kettle is still working

Do you ever wonder about who you're helping when you drop your coins into the familiar red Salvation Army kettle (now "bubble") during December? In the Dec. 6 War Cry an article highlights a handful of the thousands of people

around the world the Army helps with its Christmas campaign each year. Sally Ann wants you to see the "real people" given hope by your gifts.

"This year, when you see The Salvation Army's familiar Christmas cheer bubble, stop and take a close look inside before you drop in your coins or bills. Look hard enough and you'll see people in there. Real people. Thousands of people! Ordinary people. People like you and me. You might even recognize some of them. They may even be your neighbors.

"People like Glen, Renee, Mijan, Sandro, Barbara, Colette, Randall, Richard, and an anonymous, but very appreciative young boy.

..."Volunteer Dawn Lacasse was ringing a bell beside the Army's Christmas bubble in

Castlegar, British Columbia, when she felt a tug on her jacket. Turning around, she found a young boy about her son's age standing beside her.

"She told her story in a letter to a Castlegar newspaper reporter:

""Suddenly the child began to speak to me.

""Can I give you a Christmas kiss?" he asked.

""I want to thank you for what you are doing. If it wasn't for you, I wouldn't have had a Christmas dinner last year. I just want to give you a kiss to say thank you."

""With a single tear in my eye, I leaned over for my

Christmas kiss.

""This kiss from a child I never knew brought upon me a feeling that warmed me inside and out. But that wasn't all.

""The child slowly reached inside his tattered jacket and pulled out three lonely pennies.

""This is all I have, but maybe it will help someone else have Christmas dinner," he said, as he placed his precious coins into my kettle.

""I would like to take this opportunity to thank this child with the bright eyes and warm heart for giving me the chance to experience the true meaning of Christmas."

...Last Christmas, things

were much better for Colette Poirier of Hamilton, Ontario. In earlier, more difficult times, Colette had been on the receiving end of the Army's Christmas assistance and appreciated the help she'd received.

"Last year, she turned up at the Hamilton Christmas bureau once again. However, things had turned around in her life, and she'd come to assist the volunteer workers distribute food and toys to others.

...Thanks to the thousands that stop and drop a dollar or two in that bubble, The Salvation Army, in Christ's name, will be there to make sure that [people like Colette, the anonymous boy] and many, many others will have a Christmas just a little bit brighter."

Jacob Kuntz is a retired pastor of the Christian Reformed Church who lives in Brampton where he works until Dec. 31, 1997, as half-time chaplain in Holland Christian Homes.

Habitat for Humanity

It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness. We can loudly decry the fact that there are so many homeless people in this world, but Habitat for Humanity is doing something about it. That former U.S. president Jimmy Carter participates in its work gives the organization even a bit more status.

It was started 21 years ago as a Christian response to those in need of safe, decent housing. By the end of 1997, more than 6,000 families in 53 countries (250 in Canada) will live in Habitat for Humanity homes. It is a truly ecumenical organization. In The Catholic Register of Sept. 29 we read about it.

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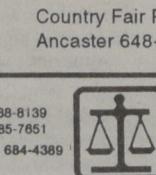
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If you wish a photo included, send us the original. d) <i>Christian Courier</i> will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements. e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to five column inches. <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of \$15.00 per column inch (GST incl.).</p> <p>NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS We offer a one-year subscription for only \$25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the <i>Christian Courier</i> and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose \$25.00 and the couple's correct address.</p> <p>Christian Courier 4-261 Martindale Rd. St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1 Phone: (905) 682-8311 Fax: (905) 682-8313</p>	<p>1907 December 31 1997 With thanksgiving to the Lord we hope to celebrate the 90th birthday of our dear mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother</p> <p>WEIA GROENWOLD (nee KEIZER) May the Lord continue to keep Mom in His care. With love from all your family. Address: Emmanuel Home, #122, 13425-57 St., Edmonton, AB T5A 2C1</p> <p>1907 December 31 1997 "May the Lord bless you from Zion all the days of your life; May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem, and may you live to see your children's children" (Ps.128:5-6). With thankfulness to the Lord who has richly blessed us, we joyfully announce the 90th birthday of our dear husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather,</p> <p>MENSE MEYERT DE GROOT Ann de Groot-Pinkster — Brampton, Ont. Menno & Clary de Groot — Burlington, Ont. Wilhelmina & Bert Kennedy — Castleton, Ont. Johanna & Jan Jeronimus — Grafton, Ont. Helena de Groot († Jan. 18, 1946) Roelof & Corrie de Groot — Barrie, Ont. Marjolyn & Carl Feagan — Edmonton, Alta. 18 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren. Address: M.M. de Groot, Holland Christian Homes, 7900 McLaughlin Rd., PT609, Brampton, ON L6Y 5A7</p>	<p>1952 December 21 1997 "Not to us, O Lord, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness" (Ps.115). With thankfulness to the Lord, we are happy to announce, D.V., the 45th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents</p> <p>ADAM and ANNEKE VANDER VELDE (nee STIENSTRAS) We pray that God will continue to bless them richly for many more years. With love and congratulations from your children and grandchildren: Hessel Vander Velde & Audrey Wiggers — Renfrew, Ont. Amanda, Shawn, Tyler Arnold Vander Velde & Jill Peak — Kingston, Ont. Justin, Christy, Derek Theresa Vander Velde & John van Manen — Oshawa, Ont. Timothy, Kimberly, James We invite you to share in this joyful occasion, at an open house, on Saturday, Dec. 20, 1997, from 1-4 p.m., at Zion Chr. Ref. Church, Pembroke, Ont. Best wishes only, please. Home address: Main Street, Beachburg, ON K0J 1C0</p>	<p>Doezum, Gr. Brantford, Ont. Sept. 1, 1926 - Nov. 21, 1997 "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be anymore pain; for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4). On Friday, Nov. 21, 1997, the Lord took home</p> <p>AUKJE (AUDREY) VAN HARTEN-VANDERLAAN Loving wife of Henk Van Harten. Dear sister-in-law of: Cobie Vanderlaan — Ancaster, Ont. Bill Hortsing — Cocoa Beach, Fl. John & Margo Vanderlaan — Mississauga, Ont. Bert & Linda Vanderlaan — Acton, Ont. Gerry & Gerda Vanderlaan — Oakville, Ont. Audrey was predeceased by her brother Jan in 1927, her sister Jane in 1995 and her brother Ted in 1995. The funeral service took place on Tuesday, Nov. 25, 1997, in the Hope Chr. Ref. Church in Brantford, Ont. Correspondence address: J. Vanderlaan, 2807 Constable Rd., Mississauga, ON L5J 1W6</p>	<p>Kitchener, Ont. Dundas, Ont. June 28, 1994 - Nov. 21, 1997 NATASHA ALEXANDRA WESSELIUS Diagnosed at birth with "Krabbe's Disease" Natasha was lovingly spoiled by her parents, family, caregivers, and friends. She enjoyed being the centre of attention. As she grew older, she enjoyed being cuddled in people's arms. Those who loved her, found that they were blessed with a greater love in return. Natasha will be missed by her family, relatives, caregivers, and friends. Much loved by her parents Henry and Izalela Wesselius, and sister Andrea, Dundas, Ont. Her grandparents Wiepke and Alida Wesselius of Bowmanville, Ont., grandmother Jolanta Pietrykowska of Ciechocinek, Poland, great-grandmother Halina Kazancew and uncles, aunts, and cousins. "Let the little children come to me for the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matt. 19:14). Correspondence address: H. Wesselius, 112-18 Dundas St., Dundas, ON L9H 6Z7</p>
				<p>Halfweg Thunder Bay the Neth. Ont. Jan. 10, 1930 - Nov. 15, 1997 "O Lord, my Refuge and my Redeemer!" (Ps. 19:14). On Nov. 15, 1997, the Lord in His wisdom took to Himself, our dear wife, mother and grandma</p> <p>JANNEKE (JEAN) TEN HAVE (nee DEN HAAN) at the age of 67, after a courageous struggle with cancer. Beloved wife of Klaas Ten Have. A cherished mother and grandma, she will be lovingly remembered. Annette & Jerry Van Ee — Surrey, B.C. Sarah, David, Mark, Kimberly Amy & Fred Breukelman — Thunder Bay, Ont. Melanie, Allison, Brenda, Carolyn, Katrina, Eric, Benjamin Rolfe Ten Have — Thunder Bay, Ont. Michael, Robbie Nancy & Mark Boesche — Thunder Bay, Ont. Katie, Ricky Ken & Elaine Ten Have — Thunder Bay, Ont. Kurtis, Sean The funeral was held at the First Chr. Ref. Church of Thunder Bay, Ont., on Nov. 18, 1997, Rev. W. Kooienga officiating. Correspondence address: P.J. Raakman, 12 Gavin Dr., St. Catharines, ON L2M 2X6</p>
		<p>Anniversaries</p>		<p>On Dec. 4, 1997, the Lord called home</p> <p>WILHELMINA KRAAY (nee PRINS) at the age of 90 years. We find comfort in God's promise and the knowledge that Mom is now in eternal glory with her Lord and Savior. Psalm 27:4-9. Predeceased by her beloved husband Klaas Kraay on Aug. 6, 1981. Dear mother, grandmother and great-grandmother of: Diny & Adrian van den Boogaard — Port Colborne, Ont. Wilma & Rob Duncan, Antoinette & Raymond Nieuwold, Marcel & Diana van den Boogaard, John & Kathy van den Boogaard John & Janneke Kraay — the Netherlands Marcella, Shanna Joanne & Peter Raakman — St. Catharines, Ont. Pete & Ingrid (girlfriend), Tim, Jim, Dave & Melanie and seven great-grandchildren. The funeral service took place on Monday, Dec. 8, 1997, at Maranatha Chr. Ref. Church, St. Catharines, Ont., Rev. G. Van Arragon officiating. Correspondence address: P.J. Raakman, 12 Gavin Dr., St. Catharines, ON L2M 2X6</p>
	<p>Birthdays</p>			<p>Interested in placing an ad. Call us for details.</p>
<p>VANDOLDER: With thankfulness to God, we will be celebrating the 90th birthday of our mother, grandmother and great-grandmother</p> <p>LOIS VANDOLDER on Dec. 21, 1997. An open house will be held on Dec. 20, 1997, at the Chr. Ref. Church, 125-4th Avenue West, Owen Sound, Ont., from 2-4 p.m. Mailing Address: Gen. Del. Annan, ON N0H 1B0</p>				

DECEMBER 12, 1997

Classifieds

 Anniversaries

1957 December 27 1997
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 and grandparents these past 40
 years.

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Church News	Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous
<p>Christian Reformed Church</p> <p>Calls accepted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Ottewell CRC, Edmonton, Alta., Rev. Fred Heslinga of First CRC, Hamilton, Ont. — Cochrane, Ont., Rev. Peter Veltman of Faith CRC, Burlington, Ont. — Wallaceburg, Ont., Rev. Richard Vander Vaart of Saskatoon, Sask. <p>Calls extended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Ada, Mich., Rev. Peter A. Heerema of Grace CRC, Welland, Ont. — First CRC, Drayton, Ont., Rev. Gerrit Bomhof of Covenant CRC, Winnipeg, Man. <p>Calls declined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Second CRC, Sarnia, Ont., Rev. Michael Abma of Bowmanville, Ont. 	<p>THE KING'S GROUP RRSP</p> <p>Supporter-based financing</p> <p>IN 1998</p> <p>The King's Group RRSP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • easy to join • save for your retirement • an attractive alternative to fixed rate RRSPs • RRSPs are invested in a second mortgage on the campus. <p>Help us achieve our goal of supporter-based financing of our long-term debt!</p> <p>For more information or forms, contact Mr. John Rhebergen.</p> <p>THE KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE 9125 - 50 St., Edmonton, AB T6B 2H3 (403) 465-3500; FAX (403) 465-3534 E-mail: jrheberg@kingsU.ab.ca; www.kingsU.ab.ca</p>	<p>BETHESDA CHRISTIAN HOMES Woodbridge. In the City of Vaughan "Just above Toronto"</p>  <p>Still available: choice 1 & 2-bedroom apts. with balconies on treed ravine site. Coffee in the atrium, "gezellig he"? A stimulating Christian environment for independent seniors interacting with families of the adjacent Maranatha CRC. Two-storey care centre planned. Reserve now for 1998 occupancy. For your free info package call or fax Cynthia Vroom (905) 856-3231. 99 Waymar Heights Blvd., Woodbridge, ON L4L 2P6</p>
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	<p>Seeking an Interim Pastor</p> <p>The Christian Reformed Church, Athens, Ont., is seeking an interim pastor for a minimum term of six months. We are a small village church in a rural setting. For more information contact John Bierman at (613) 924-1197.</p>	

DECEMBER 12, 1997

News

Calvin's Institutes in Russian — after more than four decades

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (CRCP) — Thanks to a massive translation project completed by CRC Publications' World Literature Ministries (WLM), a significant portion of John Calvin's *Institutes* are now available in Russian for the first time since their original publication in 1536.

"This project is so significant because it has the potential to get people into a serious study

of the Bible like no other project," says John De Jager, director of WLM. "The belief of significant leaders in the Russian community is that a serious study of the Bible can lead to establishing Biblical principles within the Russian society."

"The project was first initiated when a Russian immigrant from the Chicago area came to know, understand and love the Reformed faith," De

Jager says. "He spoke with Joel Nederhood [of The Back to God Hour] first, and later with me. Joel and I were both convinced that this was probably the most significant contribution the Christian Reformed Church could make to Russia."

Wanting to know Calvin

"Today many Russian Christians are asking for help in understanding the Reformed view

of faith and life," says De Jager. "They know that John Calvin helped to systematize that view and they want to read his writings for themselves."

"With the first volume now complete, there is still much work to be done," De Jager says. "Additional funds are needed before WLM can complete the entire project. Volumes two and three are still awaiting printing and distribution."

"The greatest satisfaction for me in this project is to speak to Russian believers who truly appreciate this translation," De Jager says. "This is one of the most revolutionary pieces of Christian literature to hit the Russian market since Christianity was introduced there more than one thousand years ago."

Christian school principal guilty of sexual abuse

Bert Witvoet

CAMBRIDGE, Ont. — Christian school principal Peter Van Dyken was convicted of sexual abuse of two of his former students at the Cambridge Christian School while he was teacher and principal there from 1983 till 1993. He became principal of the Listowel Christian School after that until he was dismissed this year. Before he was in Cambridge he taught at Christian schools in Dundas ('75-

'77), was principal in Wasaga Beach/Collingwood ('79-'82) and taught again in Belleville ('82-'83), all in Ontario.

He sexually exploited and assaulted one Grade 7 boy in Cambridge more than 50 times over a two-and-a-half-year period.

Rev. Albert Dreise of Salem Christian Mental Health Association has been involved in helping the Cambridge community deal with the shocking

revelations about their former principal as has Family and Children's Services of Cambridge.

The original charges were laid on Jan. 28, 1997, and the day after, Tyler Meijaard, current chairperson of the Cambridge Christian School Board, issued a letter to the membership informing them that Van Dyken had been charged with sexual abuse and that "the offense for which he has been charged is alleged to

have taken place some years ago while Mr. Van Dyken was employed at Cambridge Christian School."

He further asked members to pray for the many who are hurting as a result.

Van Dyken, 49, who is married and has children, pleaded guilty on Nov. 4 to charges of sexual exploitation and gross indecency. He will be sentenced on Jan. 28, 1998.

Christian agency wants fair trade in coffee industry



Alan Doerkson

TORONTO — When shopping for coffee, consumers should look not only for quality and flavor but for coffee produced and marketed under fair conditions, says one Christian agency.

Ten Days for Global Justice has just produced an "action resource" that explains the inequities in the coffee business and suggests how consumers can make a difference. Ten Days is an education and action program of five Canadian denominations: the Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic and United churches.

"We're trying to promote fair trade in coffee," explains Dennis Howlett, the program's national co-ordinator.

Ten Days explains some unfair practices that go on in the coffee industry. For instance, coffee farmers who own their farms receive only 10 per cent of the price consumers pay for coffee, while multinational companies which roast, package and market the coffee receive 30 per cent of the price.

Middle-man coffee traders control much of the coffee trade in producing countries and pocket a large share of the price. Also, world coffee prices are set by commodity exchanges, and go up and down considerably, often falling below the cost of production.

Avoid middle-man

Ten Days suggests alternatives to this system, for example, co-operatives of small farmers that can sell directly to coffee companies in Europe and North America, bypassing middle-men. According to Ten Days, coffee co-ops already operating help coffee farmers receive a much better price and invest some of their proceeds into member education, production improvement and health clinics.

Ten Days also wants producers and importers to agree on a fair price for coffee, including a "floor price" that covers the

cost of production and a fair return.

Another alternative is an international labelling system that would single out coffee produced under fair conditions. Ten Days has produced a sample label (which reads: "TransFair Fair TradeMark Canada") that could be used for this purpose. Some coffee products already bear this label, and Ten Days encourages consumers to buy those products.

Ten Days hopes concerned people will talk about fair trade

with coffee shop or grocery store managers and put on workshops dealing with fair trade at churches.

The Living Word
Sermons for reading services.
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R. Vander Ploeg Secr./Treas.
37 Brick Pond Lane
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Calendar of Events

Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.

Dec. 13 Christmas carol-sing-along concert, St. Thomas & District Male Choir, with Rick Dykstra (organ), Ray Tuinhof (trumpet) and Lisa Baxter (soprano). At 7:30 p.m., Knox Presb. Church, **St. Thomas**, Ont. Free will offering.

Dec. 13 Dutch Christmas evening of song and praise with many guest artists, 7:30 p.m., Redeemer College, **Ancaster**, Ont. Info.: (905) 304-1614 (#)

Dec. 13-20 Christmas concert series by the Ont. Music Assembly (Leendert Kooij, director), with Andre Knevel at the organ. Dec. 13: Melrose United Church, **Hamilton**, Ont.; Dec. 17: Maranatha CRC, **Bowmanville**, Ont.; Dec. 20: Willowdale United Church, **Willowdale**, Ont. Info.: (905) 775-2230.

Dec. 14 Dutch worship service led by Rev. J. Groen, 3 p.m., CRC, **Ancaster**, Ont.



News

'Patron saint' of Christian higher education dies

In memoriam : Robert Norman Thompson (1914-1997)

Henk Verhoeff

Robert Norman Thompson, pioneer Christian educator in Ethiopia and Canada, and Officer of the Order of Canada, died November 16 at Langley (B.C.) Memorial Hospital from a heart condition for which he was hospitalized for eight weeks. He was 83.

Thompson was born in Duluth, Minn., in 1914 and was raised on a pioneer farm in Dickson in the foothills of Alberta. Following studies in education and law, he joined the Canadian Royal Air Force in 1940.

While destined to be sent to Britain as a pilot-officer, he responded to an incoming call from Ethiopia's Emperor Haile Selassie to organize the build-up of that war-ravaged country after Mussolini's occupation.

For 15 years he served with the Ethiopian Ministry of Education and Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) to develop a whole new system of Christian schools and colleges, including the hiring of 600 Christian teachers.

Coming back from Ethiopia in 1959, he was distressed by the secular status of so many church-related universities and colleges in Canada.

Because of his 14-year experience in Christian education in Ethiopia, Wheaton College in

Courtesy: Peter Borgdorff



Robert Norman Thompson

Wheaton, Ill., facilitated his getting a PhD degree. However, there was no job available as a Christian educator. The Thompson family then settled in the Pinhole, Alta., area, south of Red Deer.

Grassroots promoter

Premier Ernest Manning then asked Thompson to join the federal Social Credit party (in 1961). Thompson served as the party's national leader until 1968. In the meantime he stimulated and counselled several grassroots movements of Christian higher learning — the national Association for Reformed Scientific Studies (now ICS), the Reformed Christian College Committee in Alberta and the evangelical Christian College committee in Langley, B.C.

Through his leadership in the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) and his numerous talks for other organizations Thompson challenged every

Christian to be a witness in the marketplace, to support the Christian labor movement and Christian education. According to Dr. Robert VanderVennen, editor of ICS's newsletter "Perspective," "Robert Thompson became the modern 'patron saint of Christian Higher Learning' in Canada.

Christian higher learning

Indeed, the King of Creation blessed Thompson's seeding hand in the formative years of Trinity Western Junior College in Fort Langley (1962), the Institute for Christian Studies (1967), the King's College (1979), and indirectly also Redeemer College (1980). In 1967 Thompson became chairperson of the board of governors of Trinity Western. After 11 years in Ottawa as an MP for Red Deer he taught political science at Trinity in 1973. Later he became vice-president and remained in that post until he retired at 70 in 1984.

It was during this time that Trinity developed into a Christian university college attended mainly by Free Evangelical, Mennonite and Christian Reformed students.

From 1963 to 1973 Bob Thompson worked for the start of a Christian Junior college in Alberta. He was one of the 23 incorporators of the Christian College Association (Alberta) in 1971 and served as a director on the first board.

Thompson was an active member of Gideons International, World Vision and numerous other charitable organizations. He will be remembered for his great heart for all humankind.

A man of vision

Bob was truly a man of God. He stated these prophetic words in his book *From the Marketplace* (1973): "In the years ahead I see a massive movement toward Christian day schools, high schools and colleges."

"Our only hope for government is for a united Christian witness in every national, provincial and local assembly. I foresee a united Canada because Christians who speak English and Christians who speak French form a solid alliance of love to hold us together."

"As I look into the future and dream a great dream, I see the evangelical thrust of the Word [bringing] Catholics and Protestants together, perhaps not through organizational union organizations, but rather through a revitalization of the Church as a whole. It is happening already. God is gathering together the scattered remnants of his people and welding them into a vital force. I see new unity, which is genuine in the future of the church."

Thompson is survived by his wife, Evelyn, and by four sons and three daughters from his first marriage of 51 years to Hazel, who died in 1992.

News Digest

Judge throws book at kids

FARMINGTON, N.M. (AP) — A New Mexico judge is throwing the book at juvenile law-breakers. He's assigning readings like "The Little Engine That Could."

Books are standard sentencing for Judge Paul Onuska. He says the famous train book and others, such as "The Little Red Hen," are filled with moral themes essential to becoming a productive citizen. The judge maintains that "if [kids] set goals, they can climb any mountain."

Onuska assigns the books in a program that makes youth accountable for their education as part of probation. When the books are assigned, some youths snicker, but others appreciate being asked to dig out a book's meaning, says Onuska.

Horse shampoo, anyone?

TOKYO (AP) — An American shampoo for horses has become a hit recently among young Japanese women. Shizue "Suzie" Shimizu, who works with the cosmetic company House of Rose, first brought the shampoo, called Lucky Kentucky, to the attention of the Japanese market. In a year, it has sold 900,000 bottles at \$17 (Cdn) apiece.

This is the latest in a line of American fads that have hit success in Japan. Other examples are bomber jackets and Nike shoes. "Japanese are the most trend-conscious people in the world," says Shimizu. "Besides, who does not want their hair to shine like a thoroughbred's coat?"

Jewish schools funded

NEW YORK CITY — Jewish communities across Canada can tap into a new \$18 million (US) fund for Jewish education announced recently in New York City. The North American Jewish Day School Challenge program will be funded by 12 Jewish business people and philanthropists, led by Canadians Charles and Edgar Bronfman.

The program will create 25 to 30 Jewish elementary or junior high schools across North America to counter growing assimilation and indifference to Jewish education, *Canadian Jewish News* reports. Recipients must match their awards in their communities.

CRC could lose big money in shaky California company

Marian Van Til

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — In the last month it has come to light that a California real estate company in which the Christian Reformed Church has invested millions of dollars is in trouble. As yet, the extent of the CRC's investment losses in the company is unknown.

CRC connections

IRM Corp. in Concord, Calif., is a 25-year-old apartment syndicator founded by John Van Hofwegen, a CRC member and former Calvin College board member. Van Hofwegen has been called a "major donor" to the church and college.

IRM told the CRC board of trustees in an Oct. 27 letter that it would "suspend all principal and interest payments and loan payments on our investor notes, as well as all partnership dis-

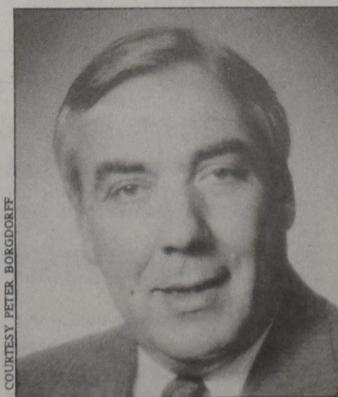
tributions to our investors."

The church's investments in IRM were sold to the CRC by another former Calvin board member, IRM vice president Jay Morren.

No one at IRM is publicly talking about the situation, or about what causes the company's apparently shaky financial situation. Even after the church sent two people to California to sort out the situation, the implications are still not clear.

In late November IRM executives told CRC leaders, including executive director of ministries Peter Borgdorff, that it would take two or three more weeks to sort out the company's financial condition.

The CRC board has now appointed a six-man committee to represent the interests of church agencies and related organizations with investments in IRM.



Peter Borgdorff

In the meantime, Borgdorff and board president William Weidenar have effectively put a gag order on the CRC's official publication, *The Banner*, regarding reporting details of this unfolding story.

"All activity and communication concerning and with IRM

will be handled exclusively by [the] committee," Borgdorff and board president William Weidenar told *The Banner*.

Prevents investigation

In the Dec. 8 issue editor John Suk says the gag conflicts with synod's "guidelines covering *The Banner's* accountability and freedom." Suk was not happy, saying that this "prevents *The Banner* from investigating the particulars of the situation."

To what extent, if any, the church can or should control *The Banner's* editorial content in such circumstances is now being discussed together by the CRC board of trustees and the board of CRC Publications. But Suk assured *Banner* readers in the Dec. 8 issue that "this disagreement, while important, is being collegially resolved."